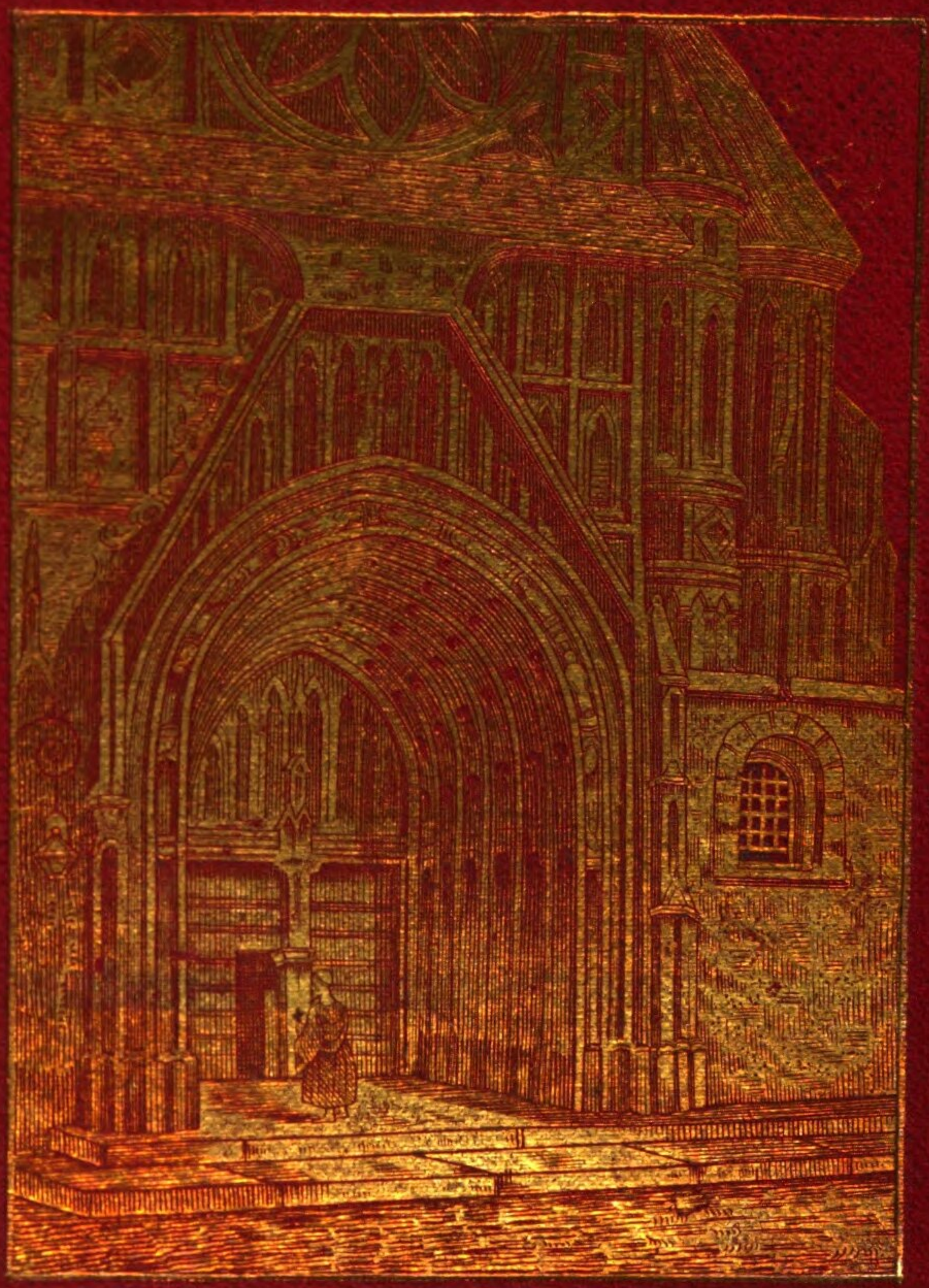

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FLEMISH INTERIORS.

Belg. Interiors

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FLEMISH INTERIORS.

BY THE

WRITER OF

"A Glance behind the Grilles"

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PREFACE.

My intention is not to fatigue my readers with a long preface; but as those who open this volume may wish to have some idea of its contents, I will state very briefly that it is the result of the encouragement bestowed on a former work, backed, if not by "hunger," by "request of friends" that I would fulfil the promise therein made, of offering to such as are interested in these investigations, my notes of a tour of religious enquiry through Belgium.

Those who have already permitted me to introduce them behind the GRILLES OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES IN FRANCE, may feel disposed to view the not less attractive details of FLEMISH INTERIORS; for, if the work of the rehabilitated Church in France, once again free to exercise her functions, astonishes and delights the minds of thinking men in this country, it can scarcely be less pleasing to

them to contemplate the equally successful labours of the same Church, among a people who may be said to have shared in all the political and social disasters, though not in the moral and religious pestilence, which laid waste the dominions of their Gallic neighbours.

True, the monastic and religious institutions of Belgium were likewise despoiled, and their recluses disturbed and dispersed, at the epoch which produced so much moral and physical destruction in France; but the spirit of evil which seized upon the heritage of "the eldest daughter of the Church," and made it for a time his throne, never obtained a like possession of the national mind in Belgium.

The seeds of sanctity, which had been so deeply sown in a purer age, still lay buried within her soil; and though hidden during the days of political agitation which convulsed her constitution, no less than throughout the gloomy period which gave to Calvinistic Holland the powers of government, no sooner was the country emancipated from this alien and incongruous yoke, than the better nature of the people manifested itself; all their ancient enthusiasm for the Church of their fathers, which had slumbered in subjection to external authority, burst forth; and, as if by common under-

standing, immediately the antagonistic pressure was removed, the fruit which had, as it were, been ripening, came to light. Churches long closed were restored to their original destination; Cathedrals were repaired and adorned with the votive offerings of those who had proved their constancy through long years of adversity, privation, and oppression; the Religious Orders returned as by enchantment, obtained possession, at any price, of their sequestrated and desecrated lands and houses, resorting to humiliation, abstinence, and even mendicity, to raise the necessary funds. New fraternities were founded; and multitudes who were yearning for the blessings, the privileges, and the opportunities of a spiritual life, crowded within their shelter.

The result of this reaction has been, that at the present hour no country in the Christian world, perhaps, offers a fairer field to those who would contemplate the self-denial, the zeal, and the intelligence of hearts devoted to the love of God and the service of His creatures.

When we consider how short the time is since the vital principle of the Church was to all appearance extinct in Belgium, we gaze with wonder on what *has* been effected, and with confidence on

what *will*, with God's blessing, be the ultimate issue of her pious labours.

One important feature in her history is this, that—free from the trammels of those *concordats* which an astute and despotic policy in France (such, for example, as that which marked the government of Francis I., and, later, that of Napoleon I.) has from time to time extorted from pontiffs the emergencies of whose position have necessitated their compliance—the Church in Belgium elects, nominates, and approves her own bishops without any other sanction than that of the Holy See.

It is true that—as in France—the Church lands having been confiscated at the Revolution, all ecclesiastical stipends in Belgium are necessarily at the charge of the state, and are accounted for in the budget; but be it remembered that in both countries they are received under protest, as a matter of right and restitution, and neither as gratuities nor even as hard-earned salaries.

The foundation on which she works, since that period which marks the so-to-speak revival of religion in Belgium, is not, I think, generally so fully understood as to render superfluous such details and statistics as I have made it my study

correctly to ascertain, relative as well to the Church herself as to the Religious Orders to which she gives life, in a country where her fervid but tempered action has been distinguished by a hopeful, independent, and dauntless spirit.

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"In Bruges town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled;
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet
The grass-grown pavement tread."

WORDSWORTH.

FLEMISH INTERIORS.

INTRODUCTION.

WHAT IS DOING IN BELGIUM?

BELGIUM is a country exciting an amount of interest which seems more than commensurate with the dimensions of its territory or the extent of its influence.

We can scarcely look for the cause in the literary advancement, scientific discovery, artistic development, or philosophical research it has manifested; still less in its commercial activity, political power, or relative position in the great family of European Governments: it is plainly attributable to none of these sources.

If we examine into the nature of the sympathies we entertain towards Belgium, shall we not rather find they owe their origin to a consciousness of the satisfactory tone of her moral and social condition — her quiet, unobtrusive progress — her even prosperity, and her avoidance of those disputes and turmoils, which so often disturb the repose and harmony, while they undermine, or at least menace, the security of more active and important nations.

Further than this: — there is a glowing romance gilding our recollections of Mediæval Flanders, scarcely second in brilliancy to the poetical glories of Alhambra, or the fantastic dreams of oriental fiction: and this is maintained by the idiosyncratic aspect of those distinguishing features which strike us so forcibly in her actual condition.

Her scenery — her architecture, ecclesiastical and domestic — the construction of her towns — her costumes and her people — all are characteristic and suggestive. There is a character, and a nationality, and a primitiveness even about that which has advanced with the times, and which has undergone such modifications as the progress of civilisation unavoidably brings with it.

Again: — there is a history in her proud and venerable cities, — in the tall houses and stepped gables, as they rear themselves far above our heads, which seems to tell itself to us as we pass along, arrested here, by the masonic remains of some noble guild which once met beneath their roof, and there, by a niche in which still stands the time-worn figure of the Saint to whose protection the mansion and its inmates were piously committed. Beyond, — a large *porte-cochère*, giving entrance to a walled enclosure, calls to mind the recluses, who from age to age were wont to watch — to labour — to consume the midnight oil, or to send up devout orisons from the peaceful cells within:

> "In sainted fame the sacred fathers grew,
> Nor raised their pious voices but to pray."

And we may glean another subject for thought while we near the old belfry tower, which seems like the habitation of the presiding genius of the place, as, ever and anon, the solemn iron tongue within, rings its musical and unearthly changes, bringing back to us, as they float upon the calm still air, the "glories of old days."

What a strange, indefinable charm is there not, in its melancholy *carillon*, so touching in its bygone harmony — its broken, defective, "jangled" melody — its "sweet bells out of tune."

Alas! how long has it been faithfully, but perhaps vainly, warning the heedless passers-by of the rapid flight of those hours they have long since counted out, though

itself chimes on still, repeating with unwearied voice the same stern truth to another and another generation.

The tones of the old bells are lost for a space, as our steps carry us out of their reach, and the nature of our *réverie* is changed, but not its retrospectiveness or its depth, as our attention is led captive by a remnant of Moorish taste, or a trace of Spanish opulence.

What a world of thought does not that object supply! What a labyrinth of years! What a maze of events! History unrolls her magic page, and fancy inspired by all that surrounds it, conjures up before the mind, scenes long since gone by, of chivalrous valour and regal pageant.

How can we look at the old streets and houses upon which the actors in those memorable events rested their gaze, and not feel that they are a connecting link between the past and the present; so unchanged too in their aspect that we can scarce realise the period that has elapsed since those who reared them passed away. We seem, in very truth, to witness the heroic deeds of the valiant "Bras de Fer," of "Baudoin le Chauve" and his namesake of the "Hatchet:" then the contests between the wily Philip and Guy de Dampierre are recalled to our memory. Again the "Chaperons blancs" with their brave chief, flit before us, and we see the old Halle enlarged and embellished for the second time. The glories of archery, and the triumphs of the skilful *arbalétriers*, who had their guild like the other wealthy corporations, claim their day, and on we pass to the gorgeous pageants which called together all the rank and wealth of Flanders, when Philip the Good made Isabella of Portugal his bride, while the newly-dubbed knights of the Golden Fleece stood round to grace the royal nuptials. Can we forget Charles the Bold and his noble lineage, or the more than human exploits of the great Lion of Flanders, and the patriotic spirits of the bold and fearless guilds, as they march on in formidable array, un-

daunted by the opposing courage of the golden-spurred nobility of France? and again we follow Artavelde, the brave brewer of Ghent, bearing in triumph to his native city the golden Dragon of St. Sophia. All this is part and parcel of the spot on which we stand—intimately joined in character and association.

The once gorgeous palaces again send streams of light from their deep and noble casements, while the merry sound of dance and song seem to issue from the open lattice.

The spacious halls with their grand, colossal chimney-breasts, and ample fire-places, again flicker with the crackling blaze of the huge faggot, and display the liberality of old Flemish hospitality, welcoming alike the rich and poor.

The deserted streets, with their *bizarre* gable-fronted dwellings, are instinct with life, and glitter again in all the pomp and splendour on which, in her palmy days, the substantial wealth of Flanders was lavished.

Those quaint market-places, with their sculptured fountains, once more are thronged with knots of calculating burghers, mingled with merchant-lords of every nation and tongue, enjoying the success of fortunate speculations, or discussing with anxious energy, the probable fate of those rich argosies in which they have embarked their capital.

The "grass-grown pavement" seems again to ring with the rapid tread of busy feet, hurrying—some to mass—some to the Exchange—some to the counting-house—some to their magazines—and some to the manual toil for which prosperous Flanders once offered so unfailing a market.

Here—what a rich façade;—see the elaborately-wrought stone-work which supports the glass of which it seems to be almost constructed. Under that imposing portico, throwing its cool shade over the massive steps which conduct you within, you think you see the wealthy

lord of the mansion standing proudly in the entrance, in deep blue silken velvet pourpoint, his sword by his side, and the graceful Spanish mantle loosely suspended over his shoulder. He doffs his dark beaver with its sweeping feather, to a fair dame who ambles by upon her richly caparisoned palfrey. There again — what a balcony for Prout's portfolio! How it stands out in bold relief against the deep-blue sky! Who will guess at the moonlit meetings to which it has contributed?

Now we turn to the canals, edged on either side by the old houses, which seem to rise out of them as they stand repeated in the glassy mirror. Our sight is bounded on one side by an ancient bridge, picturesque in form and colour, partly mantled by the green foliage of a creeper growing along the russet wall that meets it. Venetian blinds half closed, and sloped awnings, with their blue or scarlet stripes, tell of coolness and repose within.

How moving must this still scene, too, have been once! There, on the bank, must have lain bales of costly wares just landed, and who knows how many covered gondolas were moored there, ready to ply their oars at cool of day?

Then the churches.—What shall we say of them? Will not fancy befriend us here too, and with ready alacrity sweeping away the barbarisms of later centuries, leave them what they once were, the types of all that is beautiful, and holy, and devotional — the very embodying of the spirit of Christian architecture. . . . And the worshippers whom we see scattered here and there, in mute adoration, over the broad stone floor. Some close to us — some almost lost in the dusky shades of the dim vastness. How like beings of another age they look to the English eye, untrained to such a sight: — for this is *reality*, — we are *not* imagining now.

As we stand, out of sight, near the porch, lost in the bewilderment of our own reflections, the door of the sa-

cristy gently opens; a benign-looking priest enters the church. As he passes the high altar, he kneels for a moment, uncovering his venerable head, and then, with thoughtful mien, enters an oak confessional which stands behind the richly-carved pulpit. A young man is already there, and kneeling at his side, unfolds his burden of sin and woe. His voice is mingled with sobs, but he has met with help and sympathy in his guilt and distress; and though he remain long on his knees communing with his own heart and opening its hidden sorrows, he has evidently found the friend he wanted—yes, a friend, although he must needs tell him unwelcome truths. Presently he leaves the spot, and seeking out a retired corner, remains long in solitude and prayer, only now and then looking up to the altar, as if he knew that there his pardon is sealed.

An old man is prostrated beyond—his crutch leans against the rush chair beside him: his rosary passes through his withered, palsied hands, as he draws hope and comfort, such alone as he can know in this world, from each contemplation that accompanies the falling bead. A mother enters with her child: as the door swings behind her, it reveals the basket which has served her in her daily toil, deposited outside, and left behind her, with her worldly cares, while she enters the house of God to praise Him and seek His protection for the night, before turning her steps homewards; she signs the young child with holy water, places him by her side, and joins his little hands, while offering up her own devotions to the throne of God. He is silent and disturbs her not, for, young as he is, habit has taught him reverence for the holy spot which is his daily haunt.

We linger long absorbed in the silent contemplation of this inspiring scene; and we wonder whether we really are in the middle of the nineteenth century, and whether noisy, plodding, smoky London, with its extremes of

wealth and poverty, refined enjoyments, and vicious misery, is going on as usual.

We can scarcely realize "Rotten Row," with its mounted dandies, killing their superfluous and ill-appreciated time; the "ring," teeming with gay equipages, and their frivolous occupants; or more incongruous still, smart young men measuring out ribbons and muslins behind the counters in Regent Street!—Above all, we find it most difficult to believe that all the church-doors in Protestant England are fast locked, so that the penitent, the suffering, and the weary could not enter *if* they had been taught to wish it.

Shall we go then and see what is doing in Belgium?

CHAPTER I.

RELIGIOUS orders in Belgium are so abundant both in extent and variety, that like that of the celestial luminaries, their number is bewildering to an unpractised eye.

As in the astronomical, so likewise in the theological system, the better to apprehend the manifold objects each may be said to contain within itself, and which, united, form so perfect and harmonious a whole, it is almost necessary to group them into clusters or constellations, whose individual brightness — while equally admirable to the contemplative mind — is less perplexing, than the collective splendour of the whole, when it offers itself to the dazzled gaze, in its luxuriant and mazy profusion.

The first intimation I had of their amount was from a foreign priest with whom chance brought me acquainted, at the table of a mutual friend, and I confess the volubility with which he talked on a subject as familiar to himself as it was strange to me, rather tended to increase than to remove the confused ideas I already entertained of their names, their rules, their objects, and their condition.

I found it difficult to make my informant sensible of the profundity of my ignorance; and began to think my only chance of enlightenment lay in the practical suggestion with which he wound up, "Il faudrait, une fois, voir tout cela." Such indeed, had long been my intention, and it received a new impulse from the following accidental circumstance.

I was travelling by rail from Oxford to London, my sole companion in the carriage being a young "freshman," but evidently belonging to a "fast" and perhaps, aristocratic clique.

Though not more than two or three and twenty, he had what I can only term a *blasé* appearance, and I was confirmed in my estimate of his antecedents by what followed.

At Abingdon, an active, intellectual-looking man of about fifty entered, and, as he sat opposite my first-named fellow-traveller, they, shortly after, entered into a conversation, animated on the one hand, and drawling on the other. I was reading, and did not at first heed what they were saying, till my attention was attracted by the subject under discussion.

"But surely at your age," said the newly arrived passenger, "you don't mean to say you have seen all Europe?"

"Oh yes, I have," replied the youth, in an affected conventional tone of voice, "that is, all that is *worth* seeing: I've been to every place an Englishman can visit with any degree of comfort, and I believe I've seen everything that *is* to be seen."

"Well, now I'll venture to say," rejoined the first speaker with a good-humoured smile, "that there are a great many places — aye, and sights worth seeing too — that you have *not* seen: to go no further than Belgium, you have been there, I dare say, but I doubt if you have seen even *that*."

"Belgium!" answered the other, "indeed that's a very unfortunate hit. I may say I know Belgium by heart: and I did not go there as many do, merely making it the high road to the Rhine. I believe there is a great deal more to be seen in Belgium than English people generally suppose."

"Most true," responded the other, in a tone which might mean "and more than even *you* suppose."

"And I did it thoroughly," continued the young exquisite, without noticing the remark. "I stopped as much as a whole day in some places; and as I had the *Handbook* and

a valet de place, I did'nt leave myself much chance of missing any of the sights. Then," added he, with a side-glance at the garb of the other speaker—which was indicative of his calling—and an air which seemed to make sure of approbation, "I'm no bigot; I did'nt object to look at the inside of the churches and cathedrals; and I examined the carved pulpits—wonderful they are to be sure—and the pictures by Rubens and others, and the sculptures, and all that sort of thing: so you see I did'nt run through Belgium as some people do, without making the most of it."

His companion waited patiently till the catalogue of "sights" was exhausted, and then, without appearing to observe the self-complacent tone in which it had been uttered, asked with a half-suppressed smile, "And do you think you obtained much insight into the spirit and the characteristics of the people during your visit? because it seems to me, *that* is one of the objects of travelling."

"In a religious point of view, you mean, I suppose," said he with another furtive glance at the coat. "Oh yes, I think I did, and the conclusion at which I arrived was, that there is little or no *religion* in Belgium, and plenty of *superstition*. As to the churches, for instance, I expected to find them full, and to my surprise they were always locked, and the keys had to be fetched for me by my guide, to whom this gave a great deal of trouble; and I am sure when I went into a church on Sundays, the people seemed to be there merely for the sake of showing off their finery."

"My good young friend," said the elder speaker gravely, "you evidently undertook your researches in a praiseworthy spirit, and deserved better success than you met with. Allow me, as an older traveller than yourself, to say this,—that you do not seem to me to have gone to work in the right way. If you would permit me, I would gladly point out to you what I mean."

"Oh, pray do," answered the younger, who was now a little 'taken down;' "one is never too old to learn."

"Well then — I always think there are two ways of doing everything. You know the story of 'eyes and no eyes,' and I am afraid that, with the most honest and unprejudiced intentions, there are many who *might* see a great deal more than they do see, when visiting foreign countries.

"I, too, spent a long time in Belgium, and I confess I did not deserve to find so much there as yourself, for my intention was merely to pass through it on my way to Rome; but I was tempted to linger so long, that upon that occasion — I got no further.

"*You* complain the churches were empty; *I* did not find them so, but then I was there at five o'clock in the morning. *You* were annoyed to find them locked; to *me* they were always open; but then I happened to know that from twelve to two o'clock is the time for dinner throughout Belgium, and of course there could be no object in leaving them unclosed during *that* period of the day. *You*, and, I believe, many others, say that on Sunday you witnessed the worldliness and vanity of the attendants on public worship. But this is scarcely just: had you gone at unfashionable hours, you would not have seen a fashionable assemblage; and that, I fear, is an evil which is not confined to Belgium. But you, also, seem to have forgotten one very important fact, — *that there the congregation to which you allude, is only one out of many, while in England there is only one congregation which can meet for morning worship.*

"So far as to the deductions you may have drawn from your observations in church. Now, as regards your conviction that you have seen enough even of such a small country as Belgium, to be justified in concluding that there is little or no religion among its people, — I must begin by stating a startling and I fear unwelcome

truth: if you saw no more than you have described to me I am sorry to be obliged in candour to tell you, *you have seen nothing*—nothing that can in any way assist you in deciding so important a question: and I am afraid you would scarcely believe me if I were to relate to you only the *names* of those religious orders whose indefatigable labours—but only as an undercurrent, unseen if unsought—pervade every city, town, hamlet, and rural district in Belgium. Answer me this one question: *What are men and women of the same class in England doing?*"

The undergraduate seemed annoyed that he had given expression to a hasty judgment, in the presence of one who was able to teach him so much that he did not know; but as he had no reply to make, the other continued: "I am always sorry for my countrymen when I find how little they understand the genius of the monastic system, and yet at the same time how ready they are to pronounce an opinion no less upon its condition than its consequences."

"I must admit," now rejoined the younger speaker, who seemed glad to be able to say something, "that *I* have *not* a very distinct idea either of the practices or the objects of those who retire from intercourse with their kind, to shut themselves up in hermitages and convents, for I have not given much attention to the subject; but of one thing I am sure, right or wrong, there is a very strong prejudice against them in this country."

"Of the unhappy truth of your last assertion I have not the remotest doubt," said his interlocutor; "but as regards yourself, I think I can, in a few words, put very plainly to you the objects these holy persons propose to themselves in retiring from the world.

"I will not enter into the personal motives they may have for mortification and penance, for that would lead us too far, and I see my time is short," added he, looking at

his watch, "but I think we may reduce all the religious bodies to these four classes: —

"*First.* Those whose original object was to apply themselves to literary and scientific researches, and to whom we scarcely know how deeply we are indebted — to say nothing of the Scriptures themselves —for the preservation of those volumes which now adorn our shelves, and whose contents have instructed our minds, elevated our thoughts, sharpened our wit, refined our feelings, and cultivated our taste.

"*Secondly.* Those who gave themselves up to the laborious and self-devoted task of educating the young of all classes. And who is there who can estimate the debt society of the present day owes to those unrequited servants of God, who neither sought nor found any reward in this world, for the inappreciable benefit they spared not to bestow upon mankind?

"*Thirdly.* Those who devoted their lives to missions, such as preaching, catechising, converting, and the practice of the corporal no less than the spiritual works of mercy, and who, in times of danger, affliction, and destitution, were as ready to be the unpaid ministers of succour and consolation, as, amid the slaughter of battle, the contagion of disease, and the ravages of mortality, to smooth the bed of death, and even to carry the corpses to their rest.

"*Fourthly.* Those whose energies were concentrated in prayer,— prayer not only for themselves, but for all people, living and dead,—prayer for the holy that they might not fall, for the weak that they might not yield, for the worldly that they might be converted, for sinners that they might be saved, — prayer for those who did not, or could not, or knew not how to pray for themselves.

"Shall any one venture to censure such objects as these? if so, all I would say is, Let him who would cast a stone at such, see that he be altogether sinless himself."

"But why," objected the young man, who however seemed touched by the noble earnestness of the vindication he had just heard, "why *do* they affect that extraordinary singularity in dress which makes them objects of ridicule to every one?"

"*There* I must beg your pardon," was the answer; "so far from being objects of ridicule to 'every one' — as how *could* they be to any but the heartless or unthinking? — there is no country in the world (except, I blush to say, our own) in which they are not regarded with affection and veneration.

"May I add that you are mistaken as to the 'singularity they *affect?*' You forget the *real* state of the case. It is *we* seculars who have changed, and *not* they. Do but consider a moment. Had the majority, instead of the few, devoting themselves to the only important object of life — the salvation of souls — neglecting their external appearance, continued satisfied to wear what their fathers wore before them, — it is you and I, not they, who would at this moment be attracting the attention and derision of our fellow-creatures, by the ludicrous singularity of hats and coats cut as are ours, and which would then *appear*, what they really *are*, evidences of the vanity and emptiness of our thoughts and pursuits."

"Perhaps you can explain," said the youth, "why, as I have been told, these monks are interdicted the use of linen, either for sheets or as an article of apparel."

"That is by no means difficult," was the ready reply: "the use of linen did not prevail until long after, for example, the time of St. Benedict — in consequence, subsequently to the period at which his rule was drawn up; the monks, therefore, who follow this rule, which they prefer not to alter, suffer no greater hardship than did those who were living in that day. Indeed, to this hour, in Poland, Turkey, and other countries, it is customary to

sleep without sheets. Similar explanations might be given of the regulations as to food, abstinence, sleep, and others of their practices."

I know not what might have followed, but at this moment the train slackened its speed, and the elder traveller, remarking that this was the station at which he was to alight, rose, and shaking hands with his young antagonist, took a friendly leave.

Not many days after this event, finding I had a few weeks to spare, I took my place in the Ostend boat on the last day of August, hoping, as I had several introductions, to be able to make a profitable trip, although, being vacation-time, circumstances were not very favourable to my purpose.

Our passage was rough, but not marked by any incident worth recording — unless it be the amusement afforded by a very English party, evidently paying their maiden visit to the continent. They consisted of a brother and two sisters of mature age, one of whom spoke French like a native — but not of France: though I heard her tell a Frenchman with some exultation, "*Je parlez français pour tout le famil.*"

After breakfast, they emerged from the cabin, and, the morning being bright, seated themselves on a bench to enjoy the air. The ladies took out their worsteds, canvas, and *crochet*, and proceeded to work with all their might, while the gentleman, buttoning on his water-proof, pulled — I knew by the air of the whole party what was coming — a bran-new crimson "Murray's Handbook for Belgium and the Rhine" from a capacious pocket, and, opening it at the title-page, began deliberately to read it through aloud, as if his life and that of his companions, depended on not missing a word. I verily believe a cockney looks on "Murray's Handbook" as something indispensable — a venerable — nay, almost an inspired authority; he

would think it as impossible to cross the Channel without his "Handbook" as to reach Heaven without his Bible. And the party in question, like so many others, had evidently made up their minds that all the "teaching" they should discover there, was to be converted into so many articles of faith, which it would be heresy to reject, while to listen to, or to look at, anything not contained in "the book" would be wilful and unpardonable schism.

"Well," thought I, "I can't follow 'Murray's Handbook' for the best possible reason, because I have not got one; so I shall just see how I get on without it." And I found I got on very well without it; and I imagine the consequence was that I saw a great deal which the author of "Murray's Handbook" never did see, and *therefore* which no cockney ever saw either. And now, gentle reader, if you are a devout believer in the "Handbook," and hold to the "chapter of the blanket" as resolutely as the rest of your countrymen, you must shut up this volume, for here I take my leave of your worthy authority, and you will find no sympathy between us; my object being, to introduce those who will accompany me, into the hidden courts of those dwelling-places of spiritual life, of which the "Handbook" does not even mention the exterior.

He and those who walk whither he leads, pass on their way; they haste from *redoute* to *promenade*, and from theatre to park; they enter a venerable church to stare at a pulpit, or to gaze at a picture, of which, nine times out of ten, they mistake the copy for the original; or gape at a town-hall or a crypt, of which they are alike regardless of the history; and all the while, they are not even conscious that within that high, silent wall, or behind that closed gateway, works of mercy, of penance, and of charity, are sending their noiseless perfumes up to heaven. Angels are gazing on those soul-inspiring scenes: the giddy world heeds them not, sees them not; and if it did, who knows

but that some might mock and jeer, some might turn away, unwilling to behold that of which they feel themselves incapable; some might pass them by, in stupid apathy, and, unweaned from things of earth, might fail to be impressed even by the sight of that pure, unselfish holiness.

I remember well how often I misused my own opportunities in the same way; and if I never regretted it till now, it was because I too, in my day, followed the *Handbook*, and no ideas but those derived from that approved mentor ever entered my pre-occupied mind. Yes, I am afraid I was a Murrayite once! and can therefore appreciate the emancipation of my present opinions.

The compassion with which I beheld my three English fellow-travellers, did not prevent me from observing a foreign priest studiously making out the pages of "Fabiola"* in English, which seemed to interest him not a little. The rest of the company were common-place people, some English, some foreign; and were soon sent below by a change in the weather, which became boisterous and stormy. The vessel pitched and rolled, and some stout German ladies, who did not appear altogether to enjoy their position, added to the turmoil by periodical exclamations of "Ach! mein Gott, mein Gott!" whenever there was a lurch.† Their complaints, however, I must allow, were exchanged into equally vociferous gratitude, when, after striking heavily on the bar, so that deck and cabins were drenched with sea-water, we were said to be in port.

* This admired work is now translated into several European languages.

† Has it ever occurred to my readers to remark how common this expression is among German Lutherans, who seem, nevertheless, altogether to escape the animadversions cast upon French Catholics for indulging in a similar freedom of speech? I might here mention two instances within my own experience of German ladies of refined education, by whom I have heard the exclamation "*Jésus-Maria!*" used habitually on the most trivial occasions.

"Ach! ve are safe! are ve den safe? tank Gott, tank Gott! I never did tink ve should come to, any more: tank Gott, tank Gott!"

Having passed through the din and confusion of the custom-house, I just saved the train which was starting for Bruges, and got in, about seven in the evening, having no desire even to sleep at Ostend.

Sunday, Sept. 2nd.— Rose at six, and to mass at St. Jacques, next door to my inn. It is a large, handsome church, and bears evidence of additions and adornments of various periods. The pulpit is of oak, and, like nearly all pulpits in Belgium, richly carved. There was a considerable gathering of persons of both sexes. Nearly all the women wore their characteristic black cloth cloaks and hoods. The greater proportion of the men were dressed in *blouses*, but many had donned their holiday suits.

On the altar of the Lady-chapel, which occupies the eastern extremity of the north aisle, were two lighted candles: a dozen or more worshippers knelt before it. In a niche on the north side was a figure of the Blessed Virgin with the Holy Infant, holding a sceptre in her right hand, from which depended two streamers of blue satin ribbon. The costume was a Flemish state-dress of costly materials, and though, on this account, one would scarcely commend its taste or correctness, yet it served to indicate a simplicity of feeling, similar to that we observe in the most admired paintings of the Dutch and Flemish schools, and struck me also as much more likely to touch and impress persons of the lower orders than if the garb were in better taste, or were modelled upon that of the actual time.

Presently appeared an acolyth, who made ready the high altar, lighting six candles, and otherwise arranging the furniture of the chancel. A bell sounded within the sacristy, and two choir-boys, in scarlet cassocks and caps, and white surplices, entered, preceding three priests habited in sky-blue vestments, who walked to the altar, and the mass

began. The service was intoned, and the chanted portions were accompanied by the organ, but no other instruments.

Just before the canon of the mass, a relic was brought in by an acolyth; and the officiating priest, standing on the highest step in front of the altar, held it forward; while about 250 persons, all men, and probably members of some confraternity, advanced, ascended the steps, and kissed it in rotation, the priest wiping it between each salute. They each knelt, more or less awkwardly, as they kissed it, and followed each other down the steps, but all appeared earnest and devout.

One circumstance which surprised me much, was that a considerable number both of men and women knelt within the screen, and almost up to the altar-steps.

To High Mass at ten, in the same church, which was more numerously attended than before: the congregation was now confined to the nave and aisles, and there was a full band and good complement of voices; otherwise, all proceeded as at the earlier mass. The Gospel was followed by the *prône,* which was delivered in Flemish, and as that language is not comprehended in my *répertoire* I thought I would see what was to be had at the Cathedral.

Here, however, I was no better off; the sermon, which was proceeding very vigorously when I entered, being in the same, to me, unintelligible tongue. The preacher was exceedingly energetic and commanded profound attention; but the only word *I* caught was "*Satanus,*" which occurred several times.

There was a very numerous congregation here also, but crowded together in a dense circle; all the chairs being turned towards the pulpit.

The Suisse, who perambulated the church, as is the custom of these gentry, with all the pseudo-dignity of a Jack-in-office, with cocked hat on head, staff in hand, and sword on thigh, wore a purple velvet scarf on which was

embroidered in gold bullion "Kerk Politie S. S." Before the oblation he walked round the church, to clear the way for two *quêteurs* who followed,—laymen dressed in plain clothes, and holding square mahogany boxes with handles, very much resembling the "decent basons" used in real, unpretending, Protestant congregations, according to Rubric.

Mass was followed by a series of psalms chanted by a considerable number of priests within the chancel, some having very fine voices. More than two thirds of the congregation escaped after mass, and before these began.

After mass, as I walked round the apse, I observed, appended to the first column of the choir-aisle on either side, large printed boards, to the effect that persons were requested not to "walk about the church, converse, or otherwise misconduct themselves, during divine service." To this must be added the significant fact that, although those who drew up the notice had had the good taste to publish the intimation in three languages, the English translation came first; and in order that—for obvious reasons—those for whom it was intended, might not fail to see it and take the hint, it was expressed in characters about four times as large as those in French and Flemish. Pretty conclusive evidence, thought I, of the reputation my respected Protestant countrymen have earned for themselves here. Equally characteristic, however, was a small board which hung near, forbidding persons "*an de vloer te spouwen*" (*!*) This was *not* translated.

There are several fine chapels in the apse, in nearly all of which were persons devoutly kneeling before the several altars. In the Lady chapel was a *catéchisme* of about 200 boys in *blouses* and *sabots*, under the instruction of a priest. In the choir-aisles themselves were two schools of girls; these seemed to be under the surveillance of ladies; but a priest, who evidently undertook the religious instruction, gave his attention to both, in turn.

Wishing to attend vespers, I inquired of several per-

sons the hour at which that service took place. The first to whom I addressed myself did not know; the second "believed" it was at three o'clock; while the third asserted it to be four. Preaching here is always in Flemish, with the exception of the first Sunday in the month, when a French sermon is preached at the church of the Carmes.

There were placards about the town to-day and yesterday, announcing that on Wednesday next an English sermon would be preached by a Trappist monk from the monastery of St. Bernard in Leicestershire called Father Ignatius.

In all the really Flemish towns, the Belgians are very tenacious of their language: very few of the lower orders understand French, and all classes are rather jealous of its introduction. They likewise cling to their own peculiar habits; and their hours for rising, retiring, and meals, continue unchanged, and prevail among all classes; so much so, that even foreigners, residing in the country, seem to fall into them as a matter of course.

Twelve o'clock is the immoveable hour for dinner, and punctuality to its stroke is observed with the most religious accuracy.

Neither births, marriages, nor deaths are allowed to interfere with this solemnity, and to call a Belgian away from this important ceremony would be a most impolitic proceeding, unless the object were to see him thoroughly out of temper. The consequence is, that from twelve to two o'clock every thing that possesses a lock is hermetically closed—churches and convents like the rest. In the latter, the repast which takes place at this hour is indiscriminately called "breakfast" or "dinner," as in most of them it is the first meal; but it is equally sacred; and the experience of many tedious waitings in whitewashed brick-floored *parloirs* has at last taught me how useless it is to pay a visit even there, at this conventionally pre-occupied period of the day. The only plan to save time is, in this

respect, to do as Rome does, and to dine when every body else dines. It is said that whenever there has been an emeute in Belgium, however serious the affray may have been, there has always been a suspension of hostilities on either side, from twelve till two, after which the fighting has been resumed with as much *acharnement* as ever.

Walking through the town to-day, I passed and observed many large houses and long walls, broken by silent, closed windows and large *portes cochères*, in which were small square gratings, but covered on the inside.

Over the gateways were often niches, and in some instances venerable figures in them, more or less mutilated by the unsparing finger of time, or the yet more ruthless violence of some popular tempest, as with hurricane force it swept past, respecting nothing, however sacred.

These must be, evidently, religious houses, though, strange to say, this suspicion never struck me before. I cannot imagine how, on former occasions, I can have passed them by, without being struck by the quiet dignity of their antique appearance, and at least wondering what was their history and destination.

As I looked upon them one after another in silent speculation, I saw written up over one of them in old Flemish lettering '*Gods huis S. Joos*," and as the door yielded to a slight pressure, I entered. Beyond, in a neat garden, were seated a dozen or more old men, enjoying the cool of the day, and engaged in animated and cheerful conversation. One, who seemed to be the porter, advanced, and from him I ascertained that this has long been an asylum affording shelter to infirm and friendless old men. Although an ancient foundation, there does not appear to be any religious supervision of brothers or sisters of charity, though there is a chaplain; but it may have been subverted, and restored on a different plan since the revolution. The chapel, which forms one wing of the building, serves likewise for as many poor

children as it will hold, for whose benefit mass is daily said at nine o'clock, after which there is a *catéchisme* or religious instruction.

I went to Nôtre Dame at about three o'clock. It is a fine church, but, like nearly *all* in Belgium, built of brick. The tower is still unfinished, and is of very great height — said to be 165 ft. The eastern termination is apsidal, and there are chapels all round the choir-aisles. As at the cathedral, one of these aisles was filled with boys, about 150 in number, undergoing an examination in the catéchisme. In one of the chapels was another school of as many girls similarly occupied. There was a master with one, and a mistress with the other, while two priests were engaged in catechising them.

Walked on to the Cathedral to vespers at four. The afternoon sermon was just over; and, as I stood by, a numerous congregation, consisting of several hundred men, *en blouse*, came pouring out. There were here several more schools seated on benches, in separate detachments, all round the choir-aisle. The catechising was in Flemish, and there was a priest engaged with each. The schoolmasters, if boys, and mistresses, if girls, were present.

As the clock struck, the priests and canons entered the chancel, and vespers began; this was followed by compline. The music was good. Then came benediction. In the place of the Litany of Loretto they sang the "Ave Maris Stella" most exquisitely; all the voices were those of men and boys. As the priest turned the Remonstrance towards the people, a loud sharp-toned bell was rung for a considerable time; but it harmonised well with the music and considerably heightened the effect. As soon as the "Salut" began, the church, which had been comparatively empty before, seemed to fill as if by magic; but the greater proportion left as soon as it was over, though another Flemish sermon followed.

Monday, Sept. 3d.—Up at six, and to mass at the Cathedral. Four masses were being said at as many altars. At all, the celebrants wore black vestments. In all the churches here, the first mass is said at five o'clock, and the last at half-past eleven daily.

Having a letter of introduction to Mr. Ross, I inquired in the hotel for his address, and was directed to the house of an English family in the Rue St. Jacques, where I was told I should learn it. Accordingly I knocked at the door, and was very politely received by one of the ladies, who, however, to my disappointment, informed me that Mr. R. was absent for some time. I was turning to go, when her father, Col. B——, and another daughter appeared, and detaining me with much civility, we engaged in conversation, during which I explained to them the motives of my visit to Belgium, into which they entered with the greatest readiness; and being already acquainted with some relations of mine, they offered to introduce me into several of the religious houses here, which they seemed to know well, being long residents in Bruges, and devout Catholics.

I was greatly pleased with them, and nothing could exceed their hospitality and willingness to assist me as a stranger. Though advanced in years, I found the Colonel as vigorous in intellect, and as sparkling in conversation, as if not more than half his age; and having led an adventurous military life, read much, and seen a great deal of the world, he has not only the easy polished manners of an English gentleman, but a fund of anecdote and thought, which must render his society extremely fascinating.

He seemed interested about Flemish literature, and affirms there is a great deal more than is generally supposed; but he has not read much of it, though he and his daughters understand the language. Indeed, it is almost necessary for residents to acquire it to a certain extent; as nine inhabitants out of ten know nothing of any other. Conscience's revival of modern Flemish letters, he seems to think is a

very popular movement, and calculated to produce good national results.

The King, though a foreigner and a Protestant, he described as very popular, and well disposed toward Catholics, though, of course, were it otherwise, he would have no actual power to molest them. The present government, too, I am told by many persons, is a great improvement on the last, which did its best to discourage, if not persecute, religious movements.

The late Queen was greatly beloved and universally regretted; and it is said that to her pious care the young Duke of Brabant owes the deep religious feeling which renders him an object of something like veneration among the people. There are many English Protestants residing in Bruges, but, generally speaking, as a body, they have not the reputation of being on the best terms with their Catholic fellow-sojourners. The Colonel's family, however, seem to be acquainted, indiscriminately, with Protestants, converts, and Catholics.

They invited me to return in the evening, to meet some friends they were expecting.

To the Rue ——, to call on an English convert of some eminence, to whom I had an introduction. He occupies a spacious mansion and grounds, for which he told me he pays about a third of what the rent would be in England. After some conversation on Church matters in general, during which I mentioned to him several recent conversions of which he had not heard—so little do Catholics boast of these things—he kindly offered to conduct me to the convent of the poor Clares close by. This was an order about which I knew very little, and I, therefore, gladly availed myself of his proposal.

The Clares have received the additional name of Colettines, since the order was reformed by Ste. Colette, about the year 1400, being, under her, restored to its primitive austerity. Before her time, and in its mitigated form,

its votaries were called Urbanists, and it was by the authority of Pierre de Luna (named pope by the French under the spurious title of Benedict XIII. and then residing at Nice) that Ste. Colette attempted to revive the rule and spirit of St. Francis. Her first essays were made in the dioceses of Paris, Beauvais, Noyon, and Amiens, but in all those instances she failed, being treated in these localities as a fanatic.

Some time after, she went into Savoy with the same object, and having met with a much more encouraging reception, her *réforme* soon began to take root there, and thence spread into Burgundy, France, Flanders, and Spain. Many ancient houses accepted it, that of Besançon being the first; and before her death she founded seventeen new convents. Several houses of Franciscan Friars also adopted it.

The habit she proposed, and which has been worn ever since, was of coarse russet cloth, and is exchanged for one of similar material at night. It is worn in *all* weathers. Her own was composed of above a hundred patches; and so great was her love for poverty, in imitation of that of our Lord, that she always went barefoot, and to this day, the poor Clares do not even wear sandals, as is the case with many other orders which are called *déchaussé*. Denial of the will was the basis of the rule: she used to say "all self-will was the broad road to hell," and constantly urged upon her followers the example of Christ, who, from His first to His last breath, always submitted His will to that of His Father.

On Fridays, from six o'clock in the morning till six at night, she would meditate unceasingly on the sacred passion of Jesus, without interrupting her mental prayer so much as to eat, but referring all her thoughts and affections to that alone.

The same pious custom is pursued among the Clares,

who, on all their *fêtes*, or days for which their founders had a particular devotion, as well as on Fridays, pass the entire day in religious contemplation. They assert that these are their happiest seasons, and that they never seem to last long enough ; insomuch that, although the rule only appoints the duration of their meditation till six o'clock, they are only too glad to be allowed to continue it till bedtime. Ste. Colette ended her days in Flanders, dying at Ghent, in her sixty-seventh year ; her life apparently not much shortened by the incredible austerities she practised.

The house, like all others of this order, is mean and small, considering the number of its inmates, who count thirty-one. It stands within a large garden, the more considerable portion of which is walled off for the use of the sisters, and is the only place in which they can take air or exercise, the order being closely cloistered.

The lay-sisters, ten in number, and of whom we saw several in the garden and cloister, are allowed to go out, and frequently walk into the town to purchase necessaries for the use of the house. Everything is passed to the sisters through the *tour*. The cooking is done by them, for the lay-sisters as well as themselves, and the meals are returned to them, when ready, by means of the same communication. One sister is cook *in perpetuo*, and is assisted, week about, by one of the others. The sisters never, under any circumstances, eat meat, and, though the lay-sisters are not prohibited from taking it, they rarely avail themselves of their privilege, and, if they do, must dress it for themselves.

There would seem to be no austerity these sisters do not practise : although barefoot, their floors are of brick, and they allow themselves no fire even in the severest weather.

They never lie down, but sleep upright. I went up a narrow, cork-screw, stone staircase into their cells, and saw these extraordinary beds : they consist of a hard and almost

cylindrical mattress stuffed with straw, about 3 ft. long, at right angles to which is fixed an equally hard, upright paillasse, to support the back. There is no pillow, neither are there sheets, and only one small thin blanket.

In the daytime this blanket is folded up and laid across the foot of the bedstead; a clean piece of linen, stiffened, is laid over the whole, reaching downward from the top of the upright paillasse to the feet, and bending in the middle to the shape of the bed; on the middle of the bed is placed a piece of linen about 6 inches square, and on this lies a crucifix. A basin and ewer of water stood on the ground, and the sleeping habit hung on a peg behind the door.

There was no other furniture. A small window opened on to the garden; and the honeysuckle which embowered it, gave something of a cheerful aspect to the denuded little dormitory.

They rise at half-past four, are only allowed five minutes to wash and dress, and go down to chapel, where they pray and meditate till half-past five, when their first mass is said; this is always at a fixed hour, and is followed by one and sometimes two more. After these, they remain in chapel till half-past eleven. Their first meal, which they call dinner, is at half-past twelve, and consists entirely of herbs, vegetables, rice, eggs, &c. Butter, cheese, milk, and what they call "*lait battu*," they also eat, but not at *maigre* seasons. Their second and last meal is at seven, and consists of dry bread and the *bière du pays*. The sisters do every thing for themselves, washing, mending, sweeping, scouring, &c.

The rule of the lay-sisters is slightly less severe in every particular, but even this is ascetic enough to startle most secular persons. The sister who showed us the mysteries of the house, was a very pleasant, amiable-looking woman of about five-and-thirty. She had a peculiarly calm, holy expression of countenance, and expressed herself perfectly

happy in the life of which she had made choice, now about fifteen years since. The discipline they observe, she said, was "*bon pour l'âme, et bon pour le corps aussi.*" Her greatest trial seemed to have been leaving the house where she made her profession at Louvain, and which, she said, after the first five years she passed there, became so dear to her, that she thought she could never be happy anywhere else; however, it was a great source of joy and consolation to her, when she came to this house, to find all was just the same. It seems they are removed from house to house to prevent too great an attachment to one locality.

She and another lay-sister were sent, a short time ago, on a mission to England, and this was another considerable grievance to her; but, she said, she kept her trouble to herself, and accepted it as one of the acts of submission to the will of her superior to which her rule bound her. The first night they arrived in London, when they put up at the hotel, they were shown into a room where the beds were, of course, horizontal. This was a difficulty which had not occurred to them, and they made up their minds to adopt the same position as the rest of the world; but no sooner had they tried it, than they found it impossible to sleep; accordingly, they relinquished the attempt, and taking the mattress off the bedstead, placed it half-upright against the wall, and had reason to be perfectly satisfied with their ingenious expedient.

Each house has its own mother abbess, and is in a manner independent of the rest, although this is called the *Maison Mère.*

My friend and conductor having asked to see one of the sisters with whom he was acquainted, in the absence of the reverend mother, who was in London on business connected with the house there, we were taken into the *parloir*, on one side of which was a very close double, black, iron *grille*, filling an opening in the wall of about three feet

square. The room was very simply furnished, the walls whitewashed, and the floor of brick; a square board was considerately placed in front of the *grille*, opposite which visitors sit, that their well-shod feet may not come into contact with the damp cold flooring, which the sisters, though barefooted, are not afraid to encounter. To the right-hand of the *grille* was a *tour*. We had been waiting a little time, when a shutter behind the *grille* was suddenly opened, the curtain withdrawn, and a vision of a face appeared, and as rapidly vanished, the shutter again closing. "Oh! but," said my friend, who wanted me to hear with my own ears, the expression of the contentment which these sisters feel in their retirement from the world, "we do not merely wish to *see* this lady, we want to talk to her." The lay-sister, who was still waiting in the *parloir*, undertook to convey this message to the *communauté*, and soon returned, saying, the sister for whom we had asked, would come to the *grille* for a very short time; that as she was yet a novice it could be allowed, but the other sisters seldom left their retirement for such a purpose. This lady is only nineteen years of age, and is niece of an Anglican archbishop. After the lapse of a few minutes more, the shutter was again partly opened, and the novice having peeped through the *grille*, saluting my friend, and waiting till I had been introduced to her, again withdrew behind the shutter, holding it only partly open while she conversed. There was another sister with her.

She spoke in a timid, hurried manner, which may possibly have been natural to her; but nothing could be more expressive of cheerfulness, not to say hilarity, than the tone of her voice. Indeed, I was told afterwards, that she and another young novice, a Dutch lady, skipped about "like two kittens" for joy at the thought that they were so soon to make their profession. Until that event takes place, however, a novice is perfectly free to change her mind; and as the lay-sister, who spoke a little English, had just before ob-

served, "we can her no more sent avay, boot she can leave us when she please."

She said she had never been so happy in her life; and the delight she experienced at the thought of her approaching reception was so great that she sometimes felt as if it were too much happiness for this world.

She affirmed, in answer to a question, that she had never experienced the slightest mischief or inconvenience from walking barefoot, and that she had never enjoyed such good health as since she commenced her noviciate. She asked my friend after his wife and children, and seemed pleased when he gave her some intelligence of her brothers, who, like herself, are recent converts.

Among the sisters are several ladies of good family, who, although brought up in habits of ease and luxury, have neither suffered from, nor complained of, the absence of those comforts and enjoyments which might, in their case, be supposed to have become necessaries.

One especially, the Countess R——, of whom I had heard before, from a mutual acquaintance, has manifested extraordinary powers of endurance.

When quite young she showed so decided a vocation for the monastic life, that, although her parents were very averse to allowing her to embrace it, she at length prevailed upon them to consent. Indeed, they found it was in vain to thwart her inclination, and were finally induced to yield, by the discovery that for some years she had contrived to practise in secret all the austerities of the order into which she desired to enter. So much perseverance convinced her friends of the futility of resisting any longer, and accordingly, after the usual probation, the youthful Countess joyfully made her profession, of which she has never since repented.

To the English convent of *Dames de l'ordre de S. Augustin*, in the Rue des Carmes, on the other side of the canal. Had to cross the *pont tournant* — which always

seems to be turning whenever one requires its services — and entered a long street of low houses, almost entirely occupied by lace-makers. Women and girls, with pillows on their knees, were to be seen at every door, nimbly throwing their countless bobbins one over the other, and weaving their inexplicable web, each with the skill of a Penelope:

ἱστὸν ὕφαινε
λεπτὸν καὶ περὶμετρον.

Near the end of this street stands the chapel, and, following the wall which encloses both it and the convent, I arrived at the large gateway by which it is entered.

At the *tour* were two lay-sisters, to whom I entrusted my letter of introduction addressed to the mother superior, Mrs. Quick, who, I understood, was formerly a Quakeress, but she has been a convert and inmate of this house six-and-thirty years, during which time she has never passed the gates, and said she never wished to be on the other side till she is *carried out.* She has been Abbess during the last five years. After some little deliberation, from which it appeared that all the *grilles* were engaged, I was shown up an oak staircase into the *grand parloir*, a handsomely proportioned room, with large, old-fashioned windows, the walls panelled and painted white, and divided across the middle by a wall, nearly the whole of which was occupied by the *grille:* a panelled wooden partition, about three feet from the ground, received the bars of the grating, which terminated above in an arch, about a foot from the ceiling. The *grille*, though white, was of iron, and while much more open than that at the convent of the Clares, was considerably closer than others I have seem. At one end of the room was the *tour* for passing more bulky objects than could be received through the squares of the *grille.* The room on my side was carpeted with green baize, and the chairs were stuffed and covered with damask of the same colour. On the other side the oak-floor was bare, and plain cherry-tree chairs and a table were all that

the recluses allowed for their own use. Indifferent pictures in gilt frames, representing sacred subjects, adorned the walls in either compartment.

After the lapse of a few minutes, the Rev. Mother appeared accompanied by a sister. Both were habited in white linen, and wore white linen veils. They were very cheerful and friendly, and by no means uncommunicative.

Their house is for the education of gentlemen's daughters to the number of forty, and there are about the same number of nuns. Of these, ten are lay-sisters, and do all the work of the house; so that the pupils never have occasion to communicate with any but members of the sisterhood. These lay-sisters follow a rule similar to that of the nuns, but are not admitted into the choir. The occupation of the latter, besides the divine office, prayer, and contemplation, consists in the surveillance of their young charges, who receive part of their instruction from, and the remainder in the presence of, certain of the sisters. Others among them undertake the domestic arrangements of the house—the *lingerie*, *pharmacie*, *sacristie*, vestments, chapel, &c.

They rise at four o'clock, and repair to the chapel, where they remain till seven, when the *aumônier* says their first mass. After this they breakfast, and then hear a second mass, which is followed by an hour's meditation. The vesper service is said at three daily, and the chapel is open to the public. The sisters are *at liberty* to retire to rest at eight, but *must* be in bed by nine o'clock. They are very closely cloistered, and even the pupils are not allowed to be seen by, or to see, any visitors but their parents.

I was told that when Queen Victoria was in Belgium, she visited this convent, and, contrary to the *exclusive* rule, which prevails with regard to ordinary visitors, was admitted to every part of the house, being made free to glance behind all the *grilles*.

CHAP. II.

I HEARD, to-day, a story of another convent, consisting mostly of English nuns of the third order of St. Francis, which before the disturbances, existed here at Prinzenhoff. Among them was a lady of the family of Weld, of Lulworth Castle in Dorsets, to whose seat George III. often went. On one of these occasions it was, that, their dispersion having been mentioned, the King asked where they then were. He was told they were wandering in Holland; upon which his Majesty immediately said, "Let them come here."

The royal invitation was glady accepted, and having been very considerately followed by an order to let their goods and chattels pass unmolested through the custom-house, they settled in the first instance at Winchester, and subsequently removed to Taunton, where they are to this day.

At about eight o'clock, I went to the house of my kind friend the Colonel, where I found a numerous party already assembled. Among the guests — who, I think, were all Catholics — were several converts, many of whom are settled here, and appear to form a very pleasant little *coterie*. One of them, an Oxford man and very earnest in the faith, with whom I had some conversation, told me he was received at the convent of the *Rédemptoristines* here. Another Englishman, being an Augustinian, wore the mantle of the order.

Two others, also English, were pointed out to me as *Monsignores* or prelates; "but," added my informant, *sotto voce*, "I can tell you no more about the meaning

of the term, than that it is a title conferred by the Pope; that these dignitaries are of two orders, distinguished as *Mantelletto* and *Mantelone;* and as to the advantages of being nominated to it, I believe they begin and end with the privilege of wearing purple stockings."

My worthy host next introduced me to Chanoine Maes, the benevolent originator of the *maisons d'aliénés;* and to Father Ignatius, the Trappist monk of St. Bernard, whose name I mentioned as having been announced to preach at the church of the Carmes on Wednesday: anything less like the conventional notion of a "Trappist monk" could, I imagine, scarcely be conceived.

There was a *bonhommie* and a gentlemanly ease of manner about him, which gained upon me immediately; and I found his conversation not only animated and interesting, but concise and full of information.

He was very communicative about his own order, and described it as extremely severe; "although," said he, with a smile, "we don't dig our graves every day either, as, I believe, the world gives us credit for doing." I admitted I really thought this was the popular belief; to which he replied that he thought it not impossible the idea might have grown out of the fact, that when one of the community died, he was buried by the rest; and as an open grave was always left in the grave-yard, a fresh one was dug by the brothers as soon as the last was filled up.

"There is also," said I, "another notion prevalent as regards your order, viz. that you observe perpetual silence, never addressing each other except in these words,—*Frère, il faut mourir.*"

This he declared to be another vulgar error, but doubtless derived from the "*memento mori*" of the Chartreux. At the same time he affirmed the rule of silence to be very strict, and no "brother"—or rather "father"—can speak to another, except in the presence of the Superior, or if he be

away, the Sub-prior. There are in his convent—that of St. Bernard in Leicestershire — forty-two Fathers and eight lay-brothers. They meet in the refectory for their one meal, but each has his separate cell. There is also a library for their common use.

Attached to this convent—now the only Cistercian house remaining in England—is a considerable quantity of land, farmed by the brothers, who all take their part in the cultivation of the soil.

Thus they sow and reap their own corn, which is ground and made into bread on the premises; plant and cultivate their own vegetables, which, with grain of various sorts, form their staple food; make their butter and cheese, and brew the beer consumed by the fraternity; so that, in fact, all their wants — which, after all, are but few — are supplied by their own industry. The sale of the superfluous farm and dairy-produce contributes likewise to their support.

Manual labour, however, forms a very small part of the occupation of these monks: study, prayer, religious contemplation, and occasional missionary work — consisting of preaching, catechising, &c. — fill up their time.

This description of work accords entirely with the early spirit of the foundation, in which the brothers not only employed themselves in this way, but also in writing and illuminating their manuscripts with much skill and delicacy, as is evident from the curious and valuable relics which remain to us of their handiwork, while the revision of the Bible, accomplished by St. Stephen and his monks, proves that there must have been in his Abbey, men who were well versed in oriental languages.

Most of the houses at present existing, interest and occupy themselves in the education of poor children. It was in 1128 that the first house was founded with this object.

Fasting is rigorously observed. The monks of this order rise at half-past two — for they have no night office, — and resort to the chapel, where they remain many hours, tasting no food until two o'clock P. M., when they dine off herbs, rice, vegetable-soup, and bread. In seasons when the *maigre* rule is suspended, they have the addition of butter, cheese, or eggs, but they never eat meat except in the infirmary, and then in cases of necessity only. Their next meal is not until the same hour on the following day. Father Ignatius said it had taken him a long time to become used to this regulation, and at first he was frequently ill; but since he had practised it, he found himself in better health than he had ever enjoyed before, and he believed that if persons, especially of sedentary lives, could but accustom themselves to it, they would be stronger, healthier, and longer-lived. I am afraid this is an opinion very unlikely to be welcomed by the world.

When these Fathers leave the convent on a mission — as he has now, for three years — the rule is in a great measure necessarily suspended.

The habit they wear is of white cloth; it is of considerable weight; but they wear it at all seasons of the year, and at night as well as by day. Their noviciate is of one, two, or three years' duration, according to the character of the postulant.

It frequently happens, in the present day, that novices give up their intention after a short trial, lacking the grace of perseverance; but by far the greater proportion, as was the case in olden times, brave the asceticisms of the rule.

The choir-brothers observe the same rules of fasting and abstinence as the rest, although they are engaged in singing during six or eight hours every day. On Fridays the diet is reduced to dry bread; and on days of humiliation, such as Ash Wednesday, they take no food whatever. On Good Friday they go barefoot, and pass the whole day fasting in

the chapel. Their Lent is of eight weeks' duration, beginning on Septuagesima Sunday ; but the season of abstinence is much longer than this, as it commences on the 14th Sept., the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, and lasts till Easter. It is, of course, interrupted by the joyous festivals of Christmas. So much for the actual condition of this branch of the Benedictine order.

The succession of *reforms* it has undergone during its progress through the thirteen centuries which have witnessed its vicissitudes, offers an interesting and instructive history. A few suggestive details, marking as it were the outline of this most eventful subject, cannot but be welcome to the general reader.

Its original creation dates back as far as 525, when, after passing three years of his early life in the solitude of the desert to mature his resolution and his plans, St. Benedict succeeded in founding, in the wilds of Sublacum, situated a day's journey from Rome, twelve monasteries, in each of which he placed twelve monks under one superior.

After a time, however, having been cruelly slandered and persecuted by a wicked priest, named Florentius, who was jealous of his great sanctity and high reputation, he, in a true spirit of Christian meekness, to quench the envy of his adversary, retired from the scene of his triumphant labours, and repaired to Monte Cassino, where, in the forty-eighth year of his age, he laid the foundation of that celebrated abbey.

Having left school at an early age, to fly from the vice and immorality which he felt were endangering the purity of his soul, he never advanced very far in secular learning ; but the Spirit of God so filled his heart that his wisdom has been the admiration of the most refined and cultivated minds; the great Cosmo di Medici himself, and many other not less distinguished princes, having not disdained to study

and adopt many hints from his rule. The stability of his order is alone a sufficient evidence of the mental powers which conceived it. Of him, Gregory the Great has well said, that he was "*scienter nesciens et sapienter indoctus.*"

Those who are conversant with the wonderful sagacity, forethought, and appreciation of the times which characterised the rule of St. Benedict, will scarcely be surprised that his order should not only have stood triumphant when others fell away, but also that it should have formed, as time went on, the basis of a multitude of subsequent monastic foundations.

Subsequently to the year 900 it has branched out into numerous independent congregations. The orders of Camaldoli, of Valombrosa, of Grandmont, of Fontevrault, of Citeaux, the Celestins, the Feuillans, the Trappists, &c., are no more than modifications of the same rule to which certain particular conditions are attached.

By the side of these, the ancient Benedictine order still continues; subdued, it is true, by many reverses, and humbled by many falls; but the few houses which now survive have returned to the pristine severity of the order, together with the original sable habit, and, as far as in them lies, expiate by austerities and good works the irregularities of their predecessors.

The danger of these excesses, and the scandal that might thus be given to the world, would seem to have been foreseen by St. Benedict, who, as much as possible to provide that the organisation he had conceived should preserve all its purity and vigour, resolved that his monastic community should not be too easy of access.

It was not, therefore, sufficient for the postulant to express his simple desire to become a member of the congregation, it was a *sine qua non* that he should submit himself for a certain time (afterwards fixed at a year), called the

noviciate, to a trial, of which the result was to decide whether or not he were capable of fulfilling the required conditions.

The practices prescribed to the novice, during this time, rather exceeded, than fell short of, the rigour of the subsequent rule; thus none could complain that they had been deceived into compliance by a too favourable foretaste of the life they were to embrace.

If, at the end of the given period, the novice persevered in his design, he proceeded by a triple promise to bind himself irrevocably to the community and to the rule — 1. *Stabilitas loci*; 2. *Conversio morum*; 3. *Obedientia*.

We have not time to dwell upon the prudence and judgment of a legislator, who, upon a simple vow of five words, could succeed in laying the solid and enduring basis of a spiritual edifice, which was to weather so many storms and to withstand so many assaults: nevertheless, it is a very significant fact, and one which commands consideration.

The "twelve degrees of humility" drawn up by St. Benedict are commended by St. Thomas Aquinas, and are retained in all the reforms and congregations of the order.

They are as follows:—

1. A deep compunction of heart and holy fear of God and his judgments, with a constant attention to walk as in the divine presence.

2. A perfect renunciation of the will.

3. A ready obedience.

4. A patient endurance of all injuries and sufferings.

5. An unreserved communication of the thoughts and intentions to a director.

6. Contentment and even rejoicing in humiliation. Being satisfied to wear mean apparel, to be occupied in servile employments, and a love of simplicity and poverty, with a readiness to admit the unworthiness of even the best actions.

7. A sincere conviction, on the part of each one, of his own inferiority to every other, even to the greatest sinners.

8. An abhorrence of all singularity in words or actions.

9. A love for silence and constant practice of the same.

10. An avoiding of all unseemly mirth and noisy laughter.

11. Modesty in words and demeanour, and special attention never to speak in a loud tone.

12. Humility in exterior actions to be practised by keeping the eyes humbly cast down.

St. Benedict sums these up by adding, that divine love is the sublime recompense of sincere humility, and promises, on the warrant of the divine word, that God will raise that soul to perfect charity, which, faithfully walking in these twelve degrees, shall have happily learned true humility.

The regulations of St. Benedict allotted to the monks of his order seven hours a day for manual labour, and two for pious reading, besides meditation, from matins, which commenced with the hour for rising (half-past two) until break of day. In most places manual labour has been exchanged for sacred study and spiritual contemplation. It also commands perpetual abstinence from flesh-meat, in which is included fish and fowl; in fact, nothing that has had life forms any part of their diet: fowls are expressly excluded, which prohibition may be further accounted for by the fact that, at the time of the foundation of the order, they were served only at the tables of princes, and as great delicacies. Mabillon quotes St. Gregory of Tours to prove this. St. Benedict recommended a total abstinence from wine, which, of course, in Italy was the common drink of the people; but, at the same time, he *allows* three "draughts" a day and a pound and a half of bread.

Passing over many details, fraught nevertheless with considerable interest, we come to the Cistercians, so called from the Forest of Citeaux, or Cistercium,—from the wells

or cisterns with which it abounded,—whose shades gave shelter to the first congregation of this new and majestic order.

To St. Bernard is, by some, attributed the honour of its foundation ; but though there is no doubt that the order is immensely indebted to him, yet it seems very certain that two saints who preceded him had their share in its reform, and that St. Robert in 1075, and St. Alaric, abbot in his absence, contributed not a little to restore the primitive rule of St. Benedict, which had suffered much relaxation.

They could make but a small beginning, and their little colony, consisting of twenty monks besides St. Robert himself, were fain to content themselves, in the first instance, with a few spare and ill-constructed wooden cells, composed of branches and trunks of trees, rudely put together, in a deserted spot within the forest of Citeaux.

The vow of poverty seems to have been practically understood here: indeed, it was with the view of carrying out this characteristic in the rule of St. Benedict, that St. Robert suggested the erection of these unpretending solitudes in the midst of wilds and wastes. He further excluded all luxury in dress, in amusements, and in food, and desired that even their churches and church-furniture should evince a spirit of humility and voluntary poverty. He reserved, however, to the monastery, a territorial right to the land on which it was erected: this was, also, a wise enactment borrowed from St. Benedict, for the purpose, no doubt, of maintaining intact the liberty and independence of the community.

After his time, lay-brothers were admitted into the congregation, but only under expressed conditions, lest tyranny and sloth on the one hand, and servility or insubordination on the other, should disturb the harmony, or infringe upon the austerity of their practice.

It was under St. Alberic that the dark habit, originally

instituted by St. Benedict, was exchanged for a white one, which he introduced in honour of the Blessed Virgin.

St. Stephen, who succeeded as abbot in 1109, surpassed his predecessors in the strict observance of the vow of poverty: the gold and silver crosses belonging to the church, even, were removed, and others of painted wood were substituted for them; the very use of candlesticks was abolished,—a single one, and that of iron, only, being allowed; the golden chalice, hitherto used, was done away with, and one of silver gilt employed in its room; the chasubles, stoles, maniples, and other decorations were thenceforth made of the simplest materials, from which, gold, silver, and silk itself were excluded: and this, not because they were unmindful of the honour of God, which is sought in the costliness and magnificence of such ornaments, and which in Cathedral and parochial churches are very proper and desirable means to exalt the worship of God and elevate the devotional tone of the people; but because they perceived the needlessness and even inconsistency of employing them in a community such as theirs, where they were neither calculated to increase the compunction of penitents, nor to promote the edification of the congregation.

The extreme stringency of the rule, however, would seem to have exceeded human endurance, as, although all who had embraced it remained true to their vows, no new votary was found possessed of sufficient self-devotion and courage to face its exigencies. At this critical moment, when the order was in danger of perishing for lack of fresh members, St. Bernard appeared, and, presenting himself accompanied by thirty followers, in 1113, at the convent gates, humbly sought permission to invest themselves in the snowy habit of Citeaux.

Thus is it, that he has earned the merit of being one of the reformers of the order, as it is highly probable that, but for this timely support, the noble branch of Cistercians,

which he so miraculously preserved to blossom again, and continue to flourish to our own time, would have withered and died, and have been lopped for ever from the parent tree.

It is impossible here to enter into the particulars of the remarkable life of the gifted St. Bernard, however attractive they may be, or to do more than refer to the vigour and perfection to which the order attained under his auspices; it may, however, be remarked, that so wonderful were his powers, that whole convents of the monks of Cluni, attracted by the sanctity of his life and the perfection of his discipline, came over in bodies, requesting to be received within its walls, and to exchange the sable garments which distinguished their fraternity for the white vestments, and, with them, the severer ansterities of his disciples.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, Jean de la Barrière made a laudable but fruitless effort to restore the Cistercian order, under the name of *Feuillans*, to that purity, which, through the lapse of years, it had once more lost; and his attempt was succeeded, half a century later, by a reform, which, while its extreme rigour deterred many from entering its pale, effectually rekindled the dying embers.

The monastery of *La Trappe* in Le Perche, selected as the locality in which was to be planted the first congregation of this new reform, existed as far back as the 12th century, as an abbey of Cistercian monks. It was so called on account of the rugged and dangerous defile which led to it; and its wild and almost inaccessible position isolated it so completely from the world, that discipline was longer maintained intact within its walls than in any other convent: nevertheless, when corruption had once made an inroad among its inmates, their fall was great indeed.

The history of Armand-Jean de Rancé is too well known

to need repetition; and the tragical episode which arrested him amid the elegances, the dissipation, and the luxury of polished society, in a profligate age, and startled him from the pursuit of a brilliant worldly career, to embrace a life of seclusion and penance, may be looked upon as another among the miraculous rescues of the Cistercian order.

That the destiny of a man of the world, of illustrious birth, and occupying a prominent and honourable position, distinguished by a cultivated intellect, a sparkling wit, profound judgment, and consummate taste, should have been so suddenly changed, could only have been by the effect of divine grace, and, as we proceed to examine his subsequent life, we are scarcely surprised, after such an event, at the severe and almost superhuman mortifications he imposed on himself and his followers.

A rule, exceeding that of the Chartreux in austerity, was drawn up and introduced by him; silence was strictly enforced; and, as we see by his dispute with Mabillon, all study save that of holy books and moral treatises was peremptorily interdicted. The diet he adopted was of the most meagre quality, and barely sufficient to sustain life; and yet it has always been remarked that those who discovered in themselves a vocation for this hard discipline have continued not only contented with the life they have embraced, but have always been distinguished for their serenity and cheerfulness of countenance and demeanour.

Several convents of women, Trappistines, have embraced this reform in all its rigour.

D'Alembert has said, "Le séjour de la Trappe parait destiné à faire sentir, aux cœurs même les plus tièds, jusqu'à quel point une foi vive et ardente peut nous rendre chères les privations les plus rigoureuses; séjour même qui peut offrir au simple philosophe une matière intéressante de réflexions profondes sur le néant de l'ambition et de la gloire, les consolations de la retraite et le bonheur de l'obscurité."

I was very sorry to learn, this evening, that the Bishop of Bruges is absent for some days, as I had been provided with a letter of introduction to him, and had promised myself much pleasure in making his acquaintance.

It is rare to find a man so universally beloved and respected; but his character and talents are of no common order, and there is a winning grace and affability in his manners. He was formerly professor of theology at the University of Louvain, and was there reputed one of the most profound and admired scholars in Europe. He is said to be peculiarly eloquent, and is gifted with great facility in expressing himself in various living languages, no less than in Latin.

I was told that, in childhood, he exhibited such remarkable vivacity of character, that his father, M. de Malou, used to say, that if any of his sons were destined for the priesthood, it would certainly not be "Jean-Baptiste," as he was much too *éveillé* for that vocation.

The bishop has a refined literary taste; but though he has collected a library of about 18,000 vols., the books which compose it are chiefly patristic and theological.

Miss B—— amused me much with an anecdote of an English acquaintance for whom, having been for a long time desirous of visiting the interior of a convent, she obtained permission to take her over one of those in Bruges. Suspecting a snare at every turn, she determined to be on her guard, and to keep her eyes well open during the survey. She accordingly made her *entrée* with considerable awe and circumspection, and at length, when they had gone all over the house, and were leaving, she turned to her conductor and said timidly, "What! is that *all?*" "What more would you have?" was the rejoinder; "we have visited the dormitories, refectory, parlour, cloisters, kitchen, class-rooms, courts, and garden; I don't know of anything we have left unseen." "Well, but isn't there a *soupirail?* and where are the cells, and the dungeons, and torture-

rooms?" Miss B—— was quite unable to maintain her gravity at this strange expectation on the part of her simple-minded friend; but hastened to dispel her terrified apprehensions of thumb-screws, wheels, racks, and other defunct relics of barbarous times, which the Protestant imagination persists in connecting with the, to it, mysterious interiors of Catholic institutions.

Tuesday, Sept. 4.—Up at six, and to mass at the church of St. Jacques. These are the masses by which one is enabled to judge of the amount of attendance on public worship. At some churches the first mass is at five o'clock, and this would seem to be that best suited to the occupations and habits of the lower orders, such as market-people, small shopkeepers, hucksters, and hawkers. This morning there were three masses simultaneously. At one of the altars a woman was being churched.

Before the high altar, and within the chancel-screen, stood a catafalque, covered with a black velvet pall powdered with silver tears. Around it were placed six tall, silver candlesticks, with lighted *cierges* of very attenuated dimensions. I understood that a funeral mass would be said at about eleven o'clock for the deceased.

A considerable number of beggars, consisting of cripples, hunch-backs, dwarfs, &c., crowded about the church-doors, within and without. Most of them were busily engaged with their beads; but whenever any one came in, or went out, they unceremoniously interrupted their devotions to utter the more sublunary petition, "Monsieur, Madame, un petit sou s'il vous plait." The begging seems to be quite systematic, although the laws against mendicancy are said to be very stringent.

Coming out, I met one of my new acquaintances of last night, a resident here, and walked with him to the Cathedral. As the masses were over we were able to examine its details. The choir-aisles are occupied by a series of chapels,

among which he called my special attention to one, particularly rich in decoration and carved work, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and having a statue of her in white marble, over the altar, where the fire in 1839, after consuming the greater part of the tower, was arrested in its destructive course.

We also inspected and admired the elaborately finished picture of the martyrdom of St. Hyppolitus by Hemling, which, like all other pictures of any value in these churches, is closely curtained and covered, except when shown by request and for a con-si-de-ra-ti-on.

Round the chancel hung the coats-of-arms of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, among the earliest of which is conspicuous that of our Edward the Third.

To the convent of the *Capuchin Friars*, a large building, the chapel of which is of considerable size, and open to the public. The fraternity consists of twenty-eight brothers: at present they are all Flemish; but occasionally there are Englishmen among them, and some of them, therefore, understand, and even speak, English a little. The brother who received me spoke it very tolerably; and it was as well he did, as, with him, French would not have helped me at all. He was very communicative about the peculiarities of the order, the rule of which is sufficiently severe; although, as they have a great deal of missionary work, such as preaching, attending hospitals, visiting the sick, &c., they are allowed to eat meat — except, of course, on the fast days of the Church and of their order. They also hear a considerable number of confessions; and some of the fathers have been known to remain in the confessional as many as seven or eight hours at a time. This must be pretty severe, especially in the winter, as the floors are of brick, and these monks wear no shoes; neither do they ever enjoy the luxury of a fire in the sharpest weather. Their habit is of heavy, coarse,

brown cloth, confined round the waist with a knotted cord. They wear a "discipline" hung to this. They have sandals on their feet; their heads are shaven in a ring, to indicate the remembrance of the crown of thorns. When they go out, they wear a large cloak of the same material as the dress, with a pointed cowl. They sleep in the same habit they wear in the daytime; but otherwise their rule is somewhat relaxed in rigour as regards the night, for they do not rise to matins till half-past four; and when I asked if they slept vertically like the poor Clares, he did not understand my question: on my explaining myself, he was unwilling to believe I could be serious, until I told him I had myself visited their cells. This house is the *maison mère*, to which they all resort in the first instance to study, and at all times for retreat: there are two branch houses in England, one being on Lord Fielding's property in Wales. Their course of study is comprehensive, and the examination they pass through is very severe. The noviciate lasts a twelvemonth.

There was nothing very remarkable in the interior of the house, but of course, like all other monasteries appropriated to monks, no individual of the fair sex is permitted to enter its precincts. In this case, lady-visitors do not lose much by the prohibition; and, to prove it to them, I need only add, that the chapter-room, refectory, and dormitories were all that I saw, and none of these departments offered any feature at all striking, beyond their extreme simplicity.

This order is a reform of the Franciscan branch, and had its origin in 1525: from an insignificant beginning, it ended by acquiring a vigour and independence which was never attained by either the Tertiary order, or the Clares.

Its rise, simultaneously with that questionable event which a noble lord, not long since, in the "wind up" of an Exeter Hall speech, characterised as "the great and

glorious reformation" (thunders of applause), is a coincidence worthy of remark. It may be said to have brought the "bane and antidote" into close juxtaposition; for there is no doubt that the exertions and influence of this active missionary order were widely instrumental in checking the progress of infidelity, by meeting as they did the malignant efforts of the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies.

The name which distinguishes them was derived from the dress adopted by their re-former, Matthew de Baschi, who, having seen the founder represented with a pointed hood, attired himself in a cloak, having, attached to it, a similar head-gear, in which he went about, with bare feet. This change of costume brought upon him the displeasure of the *Observans*, who had him imprisoned for withdrawing, as they said, furtively from his order; however, having interest enough to obtain his liberty, he appealed to Pope Clement VII., and, with Louis de Fossenbran and others, obtained a written permission to retain the new habit, to receive into their society all who sought admission, to wear the beard long, to reside in hermitages, and to lead an austere and anchoretical life.

The indefatigable preaching of these monks, joined to their devoted attendance on the sick and dying, during the ravages of a contagious disease with which Italy was visited at this time, won for them the gratitude and affection of the people. They were very soon obliged to multiply the number of their monasteries; but these houses were not of a very expensive character: destitute of stone, lime, or mortar, they were composed of twigs and mud, and of course bore an appearance of extreme poverty; and when the people saw their inmates content with these humble dwellings, and not only professing the rigorous rule of St. Francis, but going far beyond it, in fasting and abstinence, in mortification and penance, in privation and

self-sacrifice, they attached themselves to them, and eagerly listened to their advice and instruction.

The order rapidly gained ground, and was soon joined by monks of other orders, who, acknowledging the superiority of this, abandoned their own convents in order to join them; so that in 1529 they held their first chapter, when Matthew de Baschi was chosen first vicar-general. Clement VII. at one time had had some idea of suppressing this fast-increasing order; but Paul III., his successor, showed himself favourable to them, and even confirmed all that Clement had in the first instance done for them. All, however, did not continue to progress quite so smoothly as at first: both Matthew de Baschi and afterwards Louis de Fossenbran, who succeeded him as vicar-general, exhibited a spirit of insubordination to the holy father, and were expelled with disgrace in 1537. Bernardin Ochin gave a yet further scandal by his apostasy and subsequent profligacy of life; yet the brilliant star of their destiny seems only to have been obscured for a time, to shine out with greater lustre. In 1573 Charles IX. of France negotiated with Gregory XIII. for a congregation of these monks to settle within his dominions; and in 1606 they were permitted by Paul V. to accept an offer to establish themselves in Spain, while some crossed the seas, to labour in the conversion of infidels: they had already, since the end of the sixteenth century, been spreading rapidly in Germany.

The Capuchins appear to have been to the lower classes, what the Jesuits have been to the upper ranks of society. Faithful to their original intention, they rarely occupied themselves with the acquisition of science or the pursuit of literature; and although the order may boast some celebrated writers, such as P. Yoes, Bernardin de Pérquigny, Athanase Molé, Zacharie Boverins, and others, yet these are exceptions, and, as a rule, their aim was, not to rise above the people. Sympathising with them by the sim-

plicity of their habits, they were better able to see things in their way, and, by mixing in their innocent pleasures, they were able to acquire a certain degree of familiarity with, and influence over, them, which reacted beneficially on the latter.

Strangers to the refinements of an easy and luxurious life, they wrapped themselves as it were in their poverty, that, so drawing near in the most effectual manner to those whom they wished to approach, they at once removed that bar which is so often a restraint between a penitent and a priest of contrasted rank, and drew from them those unreserved and guileless communications which can only pass between a man and one he feels to be his friend.

So numerous did this order become, that in 1782 76,000 monks counted themselves within its pale.

CHAP. III.

Between Bruges and the little village of Blankenberg, there is daily communication by omnibus.

This place was formerly known by the name of Schaerfout; and at that time, tradition states it to have been so entirely given up to wickedness of all kinds, that it only boasted one righteous inhabitant, called Elias Blankenberg, a fisherman.

The popular legend, which alone gives interest to the spot, tells that in the days of Adolphe de la Marck, Prince Bishop of Liége, Count de Hermal, a venerable nobleman, who supported the cause of the Bishop against his rebellious subjects, had the misfortune in a popular tumult to slay the leader of the insurrectionists, and, being compelled to fly the city, took refuge in the cabin of the aged Elias.

Some months after, his retreat having been discovered, eight deputies from Liége were sent to arrest him.

While besieging the fisherman's hut and clamorously demanding their victim, a violent tempest arose; the waves dashed violently round the humble dwelling, which braved its fury, standing like an islet in the midst of the surrounding roar.

In vain did the crowd — which had by this time joined itself to the attacking party — wait for the waters to subside. The storm continued to increase in violence, the billows rising higher and higher, until they engulphed the entire village, pouring into the church, where the wretched persecutors had taken shelter, madly calling for their priest, whom now that they sought him, they found not.

The party within the cottage were engaged in prayer,

expecting every moment to be their last, when their little boat was dashed up to the threshold, and they succeeded in entering it. During the whole of that night they were tossed about on the waste of waters; but when the morning dawned, the storm had abated, and they found themselves close to the belfry tower, in the upper chambers of which, the priest had sought security. The fisherman rebuilt his hut, and a new village rose upon the site of the buried hamlet, taking the name of him who had alone been found faithful when all his neighbours had yielded to the general depravity.

To the station to meet Father Ignatius, with whom I had arranged to visit the reformatory institutions of Beernem and Ruysselede, to-day. We were a good deal delayed and put out by the irregularity of the trains, which by no means corresponded with the hours printed in the list; and when, after the lapse of half an hour, we had got off, we suddenly came to a stand-still in the middle of the road; and, upon inquiring into the cause, the coolness and unconcern with which we were informed "*il y a quelque-chose de cassé à la machine*," seemed pretty strong evidence that our fellow-passengers, no less than the officials themselves, were used to these accidents, and considered them of little importance.

After a full half-hour's delay, the engine resumed its speed, and we at last reached Blumendael. Here we took leave of M. Chanoine Maes, who had accompanied us thus far on his way to one of his *maisons d'aliénés*, at Cortenberg. We had a good deal of talk on the subject of lunatics, whose peculiarities he seems to have studied much; and he entered very minutely into the particulars of the management of his two houses, which interested me greatly.

With Chanoine Maes I also had some conversation on the moral condition of Belgium generally. Few can have

had more opportunity of judging of it than himself, so that I addressed my inquiries to him with perfect confidence.

Like the doting father, however, whom Gavarni has depicted, as holding up his puny and "muling" heir to the gaze of smooth-tongued admirers, assuring them the while with earnest simplicity, "ce n'est pas que je suis son père, mais il faut avouer que c'est un amour d'enfant," the good Chanoine seemed slightly prepossessed in favour of his countrymen. Nevertheless his patriotism was only characteristic, and even making allowance for a due share of it, we must admit he has good reason to be satisfied with the degree of superior respectability Belgium may claim as a nation.

He maintains that the morality of Belgium exceeds that of all other countries; and carries off the palm when compared with the tone which pervades society of all classes in France. He further remarked, that the portion of the latter country where the highest moral and religious feeling prevails, is the north, which has always been more or less identified with Belgium, once indeed formed part of it, and is still styled "*La Flandre Française.*" The Flemish language is still spoken in this part of France, and many Flemish customs have been preserved there, although it has long ceased actually to belong to the Belgian dominions.

Compared with England, the purity of manners of the Belgians casts us entirely into the shade, whether we speak of the higher or less elevated grades of society. A glance at the statistics of crime in both countries is sufficient proof of this assertion. To use the Chanoine's own words, and he seems to have been a keen observer of these matters, "Les crimes qui se commettent en Belgique, ne sont que rarement perpétrés avec cette finesse, cette étude,

et par suite, avec cette méchanceté comme on en voit commettre en si grand nombre, en Angleterre.

"Ceux qui sont coupables, en Belgique, de ces crimes, dégradant pour l'humanité, sont généralement des êtres de la plus basse classe de la société ; des gens à demi brutes, qui n'ont pas eu d'éducation, ou qui n'ont jamais été aptes à en reçevoir, aussi rencontre-t-on rarement des empoisonnemens ou d'autres crimes pour lesquels il faut un certain dégré d'intelligence."

"An important circumstance has to be taken into account when considering the state of crime in Belgium, which tells much, in appearance, against it. We must remember that Belgium has no distant colonies to which to transport her convicts, who consequently are perpetually repeating their crimes, and returning on the hands of the law."

"To what causes then," said I, "do you attribute the superiority you claim for the Belgians over other nations?"

"First," answered the Chanoine, "I believe religion has —as indeed it ought—a great share in these happy results. Since the third and fourth centuries, to which period we trace the establishment of Christianity in Belgium, the people has remained attached to it with a fidelity and a constancy which has resisted all attempts to weaken or corrupt it.

"In the second place, I think the character and disposition of the Belgians, as a race, is calculated to form a basis of the most stable and enduring nature. You will find them contemplative, steady, laborious, simple in their habits, and content with little ; rarely given to indulge in acquired tastes and fanciful desires, and therefore, in a great measure, ignorant of the luxuries and excesses which in others, have become almost necessaries.

"This tranquillity of temperament naturally preserves them from many of those embarrassments in which the

rash, the imprudent, and the enterprising are likely to find themselves, and from which it is so difficult to extricate oneself with clean hands.

"And I may add, that it is the peculiarity of the Belgians to be able to pass through life without those pernicious amusements, frivolous distractions, and dissipating pleasures, with which more excitable nations are wont to kill those hours they know not how to value, and to fritter away wealth which might be so much more profitably expended.

"Another cause is suggested by the patriotism which distinguishes the Belgian, and the attachment with which he holds to his Penates, and to all domestic ties.

"This feature, which also marks the Englishman, is carried to excess in the Belgian, who scarcely leaves his native place, even to travel in his own country, and very seldom to visit any other. Surrounded as he is, therefore, by connections and acquaintances, among whose ancestors, his own left an honoured reputation, he is actuated by an innate desire to keep up his family honour, and to transmit it unsullied to his children. I may say, I have universally remarked, that those of my countrymen who have fallen into crime are almost invariably men who had been previously given up to a vagabond and desultory life."

"I have understood, nevertheless," said I, "that the crime of suicide is not unfrequent among you, though my own country has the credit of being sufficiently distinguished by a great proneness to indulge in it."

"So far you are right," replied the Chanoine, "and that is another point among many, of similarity of character between us: but I may also say, that if in that respect we are on a level with you; in such crimes as infanticide —so frequent in England,—parricide, murder, highway robbery, and the remainder of the frightful catalogue, we are a very long way behind.

"Burglary, for example, is exceedingly rare; as a proof of which, I need only allude to the custom we have of locking up our houses with furniture, plate, &c. in them; and leaving them empty when we visit our country seats, even putting up a notice on the door to that effect. Here is an opportunity which a London *Chevalier d'Industrie* would certainly not be slow to improve.

"Perhaps," continued he, "the facility we enjoy in transmitting money by letter—so dangerous an experiment in England—may be cited as an instance of the superior honesty of those employed in this department of public accommodation."

"That is just a question I intended to ask," said I; "do tell me how so great a boon is secured, for it has always seemed to me a crying disgrace on the other side the water."

"The plan is very simple," answered he; "we merely declare at the post-office, that such a letter contains money; we must pre-pay it, and stamp it with five seals all of the same impression, which must not be an ordinary wafer stamp, but a cipher or crest; we then receive a ticket of acknowledgment, after which the post-office holds itself responsible, and there is no instance of a loss occurring. We have no post-office orders,—indeed they would be unnecessary."

Before parting he gave me a note whereby to obtain admission to all parts of the institution at Bruges, which I had told him I should like to visit.

He seemed to think that a very beneficial influence was exercised on the minds of the insane, where the complaint was purely mental, and there was no organic disease, by their intercourse with priests and *religious*. In the great majority of cases, he said, insanity was produced by the disappointment of some cherished passion, such as avarice, ambition, love; sometimes by the misconduct or death of

children or other relatives, and similar causes. Now in all these cases, they were undoubtedly the fittest for the task, who had abjured all those ties which bound others so closely to the world and its pursuits, and who had openly proclaimed their detachment from allurements, the loss of which had produced so fatal an effect on those it was their occupation to console and instruct. They could point to their own condition, voluntarily chosen, and could, not only with justice, but with a feeling which nothing but experience could give, appeal to their own interior peace and contentment as an example of the patience with which privation should be endured, and as an incentive to a better principle and a better motive for supporting afflictions and trials.

Arrived at Blumendael, where we had been led to expect there were plenty of carriages to be hired, we inquired for one to convey us to Beernem and thence to Ruysselede; but no such article being obtainable, we were not sorry to hear that the former place was not further distant than a "*petite demie lieue*," and that, after halting there, we could easily make our way on foot to the other village. Hearing this, and moreover having no alternative, we started bravely, taking the road which had been pointed out to us at the little inn which professed to have "voitures à louer."

We walked on a long time in the same direction, and, to say the truth, I was so fascinated by the conversation of my companion, that I soon ceased thinking about the road or our destination, till, as we were passing through a little nest of cottages — the first habitations we had seen — it struck us both we might as well ask if we had not come too far. We accordingly looked in at the first door, and at the second, and even the third, but without the remotest possibility of making ourselves understood: no language did they understand but Flemish; and the most

elegant Parisian-French or Hanoverian-German was but as Greek to their unconscious ears. There was no want of *willingness* to comprehend us, but I certainly thought all those we addressed very deficient in *intelligence*, as even signs seemed to make no way with them. At last a good-humoured damsel, as if struck with a bright thought, pointed across the road, and bade us follow her to a window at which she tapped. Within, were six or eight bare-legged tailors squatted on a board; and it appeared that one of these worthies was able to understand a few words of French. Bad as this was, it opened a door of hope; and we at last made out from his somewhat dubious *patois*, that we were within about a "quart de lieue" of Beernem. On we proceeded, therefore, though considerably mystified at the formidable length to which the original *petite demie lieue* had increased; and after as dusty a walk as can be imagined, found ourselves in a wretched village, consisting of small low houses, but with no appearance of a school or large building of any sort. We now perceived that we must have made some mistake, but there was no getting any satisfaction from the inhabitants. We accordingly turned to the *présbytère*, but to our dismay, there learned that M. le curé and his vicaire were gone to the Kermesse at St. Georges, and would not return till the evening.

All the information we could obtain was contained in three dissentient directions; but all seemed to agree we had mistaken our way, and had come to the village of *Berleghem* instead of the school of *Beernem*, which we had left about four miles behind us. It would be too long to relate how we waded back through a road about two feet deep in sand, — how we reached a *pont tournant* just as a heavy barge was coming up the canal, and had to wait till it was closed again, — how we hailed the sight of a road-side pot-house, which would have repelled us with a shudder under any other circumstances,—and how our hearts failed

when we discovered that "*hier verkoopt men drank*" literally meant what it said, and nothing more ;—how, after asking in vain successively for meat, eggs, cheese, and bread, which they had *not*, we were reduced to beg for a specimen of the "*drank*" which they had,—and how, when it was produced, we offended the host by our utter inability to bring ourselves to apply to it any other test than that of our olfactories,—and how we succeeded in mollifying his wrath and restoring his equanimity by the donation of a silver piece.

Next door to this hopeless *gast-huis*, from which we turned in despair, was a blacksmith's forge, and from its master we procured what we wanted most,—a guide—in the shape of a *gamin déchaussé*, who, for the sake of turning an honest penny, undertook to conduct us to the object of our search. We were most fortunate in the weather, which continued bright without being oppressively warm ; and after a walk of about a mile and a half we came in sight of the Beernem school. The building is very peculiar, being of brick, but painted of a bright pink picked out with stone-coloured copings. Strange to say, though somewhat *bizarre* in appearance, the effect was by no means bad : perhaps the extreme neatness of the garden and fences by which it is surrounded contributed to the pleasing aspect of the exterior.

In a field a little beyond, was a party of girls belonging to the institution, engaged in weeding. One of the sisters stood in the midst with a book in her hand, apparently reading to them. They were dressed in a very picturesque uniform, consisting of a scarlet petticoat, blue jacket and stockings, and *sabots*.

Having walked up the gravel path to the entrance, we were met by the *sœur portière*, who showed us into a large, lofty, and handsome *parloir* on the ground floor, where we found the mother-superior and two of the sisters

sitting with two of the inspectors from the house at Ruysselede.

They made us welcome with much hospitality; and after we had refreshed ourselves with home-baked bread and home-brewed beer, we were allowed to see the house. It consists of three sides of a large quadrangle, and is two stories high. The space it encloses is used as a *basse cour*, the cowhouses and dairy occupying the fourth side. The chapel I liked least; it is, in fact, the refectory, but serves for both purposes: the sacrarium, which is used daily for the celebration of mass, however, is curtained off during meals; still, there stands the altar, tabernacle, and sanctuary-lamp, which, of course, is kept burning; and I must say I was surprised such an idea should have occurred to a Catholic mind, or should have been carried out in a Catholic training-institution. One great desecration which I had occasion to witness, and which was the almost inevitable consequence of such an arrangement, was, that the floor, being covered with *débris* from the table, and being level with the ground, half a dozen stray hens from the farm-yard, "*par l'odeur alêchées*," had wandered in, and were picking up their harvest, all the while giving utterance to loud and discordant glee.

The girls, nearly 250 in number, consist, not of juvenile criminals, as the name of the institution seems to imply, but of orphans, forsaken children, vagabonds, and mendicants. They are trained in habits of great neatness and usefulness, and are converted into excellent domestic servants. The labours of the house are divided among them, some undertaking the scouring and sweeping, others the cooking, baking, washing, farmyard, dairy, &c. An exchange of services has been organised between the two houses: thus, the boys make bread and supply farm-produce for the girls, who in return wash, mend, and manufacture shirts and blouses for the boys.

Everything is exquisitely neat; and we were both particularly struck with the dormitories, which are decidedly the most remarkable I have ever seen. They are in the upper story, and the roof is consequently arched. The beds, which stand side by side against each wall, are shaped like oval cribs or bassinettes; they are covered with drawn brown holland, and round the edge of each hangs a little scolloped frill, bordered with scarlet. Above the head of each bed is a ledge contrived in the wall, and divided into compartments, so as to hold each *trousseau* separately, and at the foot is fixed a locker, which serves also as a seat, and as a kneeling place for their private prayers. All the woodwork is painted green, picked out with scarlet, and the dormer windows, which light the room, are likewise painted of the latter colour, so that the light has a soft, warm tint. The floor is of narrow oak boards, beautifully close, waxed, and polished like a glass; and at each bedside is a small green carpet bound with scarlet. The lavatories are separate but close at hand. Two sisters sleep in each dormitory, one at either extremity.

The kitchen is equally neat. In the work and class rooms I observed improvements which neither Father Ignatius nor I had before seen. In the former were fixed long cushions about the height of a table, in front of each bench, to which the girls can fix their work. When they leave off, each girl straps her work on to this cushion in her own place, with a leather band, which is fixed underneath. In the class room, the slates, instead of being moveables, as in most schools, are made fixtures, each being sunk into the place its owner claims at the desks with which the room is fitted.

There are nine sisters of the order of *Nôtre Dame de Namur*, and it is necessary that they should, to be eligible for this institution, speak both French and Flemish, as the children are instructed in both languages.

There are many of the sisters of this order in England: education is their work, and it is strange that, generally speaking, they seem to have a great aptitude for languages, and learn even English with much facility.

Having given as much time as we could spare to the inspection of this house, we set off for Ruysselede to the great astonishment of the sisters, who assured us it was a good hour's walk; however, we accomplished it in less than three-quarters of an hour, and beguiled the time so successfully that we were both quite surprised when the building suddenly rose before us. There was no mistaking it, for it wore the same buff and pink livery as the sister-institution; and appeared only to differ inasmuch as it was on a very much larger scale: indeed, it occupies a full hour merely to walk through the various departments.

The edifice forms a large quadrangle, the open gravelled space in the centre of which, serves as a play and gymnastic ground for the boys.

We were conducted at once to the refectory, where, as it was supper-time, we saw the whole 526 boys assembled. There they sat at the long tables, each with his pewter porringer of soup, and a plate of potatoes and bread, before him, to which he seemed to be doing ample justice, while a savoury odour filled the hall. Military discipline is observed here, and as the inspector bade us observe, "tout se fait au son de la trompette."

Consequently, supper being ended, three of the boys, at a given signal, sounded a flourish with their horns, when, in an instant, as if by magic, all stood up, crossed themselves, and said grace. At a second blast, a loud but momentary rustle was heard, and all the straw hats were donned; then the same boys, preceding them, stood in the door-way, and with their bugles sounded the call for some minutes, when all followed in perfect order, forming from

either side of the table in double file as they met opposite the door.

The sound of their *sabots* treading the stone flags reminded me of the thousand boys tramping the hard gravel walk at Mettray, with similar *chaussure*, when mustered for chapel.

Although not for boys of the same description, the arrangements here are almost on the model of those at Mettray, the difference as to clothing, diet, general treatment, &c., being of course in favour of Ruysselede.

The dormitories are neat and scrupulously clean, but perfectly plain, and there is no furniture whatever in them but the iron bedsteads on which the boys sleep. The lavatories, as at Beernem, are placed at either extremity of the dormitories. Below these are a series of large roomy *atéliers* where the boys are initiated under master-workmen in the mysteries of various trades; each boy chooses his own, according to his peculiar aptitude for the same. In like manner, a considerable number are put to farm work and agricultural labour. The kitchen likewise has its *employés;* but the duties here are taken in turns. In the *Boulangérie*, on the other hand, the young bakers are apprentices as in the *atéliers*. On the premises is a powerful steam-engine which is turned to considerable account in the service of the house; by its means the labours of pumping, cooking, raising weights, threshing (corn), grinding, &c., are materially lightened.

The chapel is a very handsome building; but mass is only said there once a week, unless there are days of obligation between the Sundays. Indeed, strange to say, there are no religious services during the week, and the reason given, is the necessity of attention to field labours. It is true the boys *all* attend the *catéchisme* daily; but in this even, they receive their elementary instruction from the superintendent, and not from M. le Prêtre Directeur.

The day, however, begins with a prayer, which they say at their bedside, at a given signal, before leaving the dormitory ; and at night a similar rule is observed, before retiring to rest. In addition to this, not only each meal, but every lesson is preceded by a prayer and followed by a thanksgiving. There is a crucifix at the extremity of every ward.

One reason why they are limited as to religious means is, that there is at present only one *aumônier* for the two Institutions ; and although he resides at Ruysselede, he walks over to Beernem every morning, in all weathers, to say mass there at six o'clock, after which he attends to the spiritualities of the house before returning.

On Sundays he must of necessity say mass at both houses ; and, in order to divide the day judiciously, has to make two journeys thither (always on foot) ; besides which, the sermons and instructions to the inmates of both during the day, are of seven hours' duration. They are carefully prepared for confirmation, and after their first communion, every child comes monthly to confession.

We were shown a row of cells for solitary confinement, to which recourse is occasionally had in extreme cases ; but this is of rare occurrence, and corporal punishment is even less frequent.

There is a circulating library for their instruction and amusement ; and besides in-door games for wet weather, and the gymnastic instruments with which the playground is supplied, there is a large model of a vessel fully rigged for the practical instruction of those who have an inclination for the sea. They say a great number take to this life, and turn out well.

The farm is on a very extensive scale, and there is an experienced bailiff and farm-servants to instruct and superintend the boys in its management.

In the beast-house, five-and-twenty head of horned cattle were fattening, and a piggery of almost equal dimensions was well stocked with bacon-pigs and porkers, whence a large quantity of bacon and hams are cured on the premises. These, and the dairy produce of forty cows, with that of a large poultry-yard, contribute materially to the support of the Institution.

In the stables were eight or ten stout horses for farm work. The fruit and kitchen gardens are in themselves a show, both being of ample dimensions and in prime order.

The bailiff or *Directeur Général*, who takes the supervision and responsibility of the whole concern, has a very pretty house on the premises, where he lives with his wife, children, and servants.

The officers in charge of the establishment and their salaries are as follows:—

	Per Annum.
M. le Directeur Général - - -	1400 fr.
M. le Prêtre Directeur - - -	1400 „
An Accountant or Steward - -	1400 „
Two "Commis Adjoints," each -	300 to 800 „
A "*Magasinier*" (storekeeper) -	300 „ 800 „
Two teachers, each - -	400 „ 800 „
One superintendent in chief -	400 „ 800 „
A certain number of superintendents, calculated at the rate of one to every sixty boys - - -	300 „ 600 „

A gardener, miller, baker, *concierge* (or house-porter), master workmen to superintend the workshops (*atéliers*), farm, stables, &c.; an engineer to work the steam-engine and keep watch over the machinery in general.

There is also a physician. All the regulations are minute and excellent in their organisation, and no less admirable in practice than in theory.

The twenty-four hours of the day are distributed much as follows:—

Labour,—from eight and a half to nine hours.

Instruction, scholastic and religious,—two to three hours.

Music, vocal and instrumental,—one to two hours.

Meals,—three-quarters of an hour.

Recreation,—three-quarters to an hour.

Dressing, undressing, morning and evening prayer,—one to one hour and a half.

Sleep,—eight to eight and a half hours.

They rise at five. Half the number then proceed to the schoolroom to receive class-instruction, and the rest go to their labour either in the field or *atélier*. In the evening they change about, and the other half takes its turn.

They have three meals a day, but eat meat only twice a week. On Sundays and festivals the hours which on other days are given to out-door labour or the acquisition of handicrafts, are devoted to religious instruction, lectures, catechism, and also to gymnastics, music, and recreation.

Games of chance of *all* sorts are strictly prohibited, and borrowing, lending, or exchanging food, clothes, or property of any kind, is rigidly interdicted.

None of the boys are allowed to possess money; and those who happen to have any when they come, are obliged to deposit it with the Directeur, who returns it when they leave.

The rule of silence is observed in the *atéliers*, class-rooms, dormitories, and refectories.

They are received as young as at five years of age,—sometimes as early as two,—and are retained until eighteen.

To encourage these lads in good behaviour, there are a variety of rewards, among which are, besides being inscribed

in the *table d'honneur*, permission to learn music, that of being made members of the band belonging to the Institution, of visiting their families, of admission to the library, of presents of tools, and sometimes awards of money. When this latter is granted them, it is only after the question has been referred to the Committee or the Director, and it is reserved for them until they leave.

The punishments to which they are liable are as follows:—

Reprimand in public or in private.

Exclusion from games and amusements.

The imposition of a task during the recreation of the rest.

Withdrawal from the band of the house.

Suspension of music-lessons.

Forced march, with or without handcuffs.

Restriction of diet to bread and water.

Removal from any post of trust, or from the grade of monitor or sub-monitor of the section.

Striking the name out of the list of honour.

Solitary confinement.

These punishments are awarded in private, or before the rest of the pupils, according to circumstances, the culprit having previously gone through a trial, in which witnesses are called, and everything is done to make the event as solemn and imposing as possible.

The rehabilitation of a boy who has returned from punishment, follows the same rule as the penance imposed. Thus, if the sentence was pronounced in private, his restoration to the position he formerly held will be likewise matter of private arrangement, and *vice versâ*.

The *Directeur* is always nominated by the King; the other officers by *Le Ministre de la Justice*.

The house was built and stocked by means of a loan from Government of 275,000 fr., with which they re-

ceived a grant of 286 acres of land. On this they were to pay interest; but now the debt is nearly cleared off, and the Institution is self-supporting.

At the village of Ruysselede, about two miles beyond the school, is a house of a most interesting character, founded entirely by the exertions of the *Curé* of that place. It is under the care of 27 *Sœurs de Notre Dame des sept Douleurs*, and comprises a great variety of *œuvres* under one roof.

First, there is an *Ecole Manufacturière*, where, in different *atéliers*, and under different master-workmen, young lads are gratuitously instructed in the primary elements of any trade for which they show an aptitude.

Secondly, a free school for the education of young girls of the poorer class.

Thirdly, a boarding-school for friendless girls, in which, besides the usual scholastic instruction, they are taught all sorts of useful employments, such as may fit them for domestic service.

Fourthly, an incurable hospital, or asylum for infirm persons of both sexes.

Fifthly, a staff of sisters who go out to nurse the sick poor, at their own homes.

Feeling our moments were numbered, and that it would only be by diligent walking we should reach the station in time for the latest train, we put on our utmost speed, and accomplished our task within the given time.

Doubtless, but for the companionship of which I enjoyed the advantage, this would have been a very vexatious and fatiguing expedition; whereas, under the circumstances, I found it quite the reverse, and had reason to rejoice in the opportunity it afforded me of learning by experience how cheerful, well-informed, refined, and enlarged are the views and opinions of a class of men whom the world designate as narrow-minded, ignorant, and

bigoted. I never remember to have passed a pleasanter day.

Wednesday, 5th Sept. — Having arranged to visit the *Hospice St. Julien*, one of Chanoine Maes's admirable Institutions, I proceeded to the Rue de la Bouverie, where I was to meet Father Ignatius at ten o'clock.

Arrived at the convent, we were shown into the Salle-à-manger, or guest-chamber, a fine room in the style of the last century, with noble windows, tapestried walls, and substantial furniture. It is here that annual and other meetings are held by the friends and supporters of the Institution: on the occasion of a dinner given to such persons, the guests are waited upon by the convalescent patients, who acquit themselves so well that no one would discover in them any mental indisposition.

The Mother Superior soon appeared, received us with great civility, and readily consented to show us the Institution.

The building is extensive, but irregular and rambling, not having been originally constructed for its present purpose. This, as well as the land on which it stands, is parish property, which occasions much inconvenience to the occupants. Such are the restrictions that they can neither add, alter, nor even repair any portion of it without express permission. There is a farm of about fifty acres attached, which furnishes occupation to the male patients, and contributes to their common support.

This house contains about 330 inmates of both sexes and all ages; though, except in the case of children born idiots, madness seldom manifests itself in persons under twenty years of age. But of this number, about twenty are sent out cured, annually, and about as many are removed by death. There are some patients who have been in the Institution ever since it was founded.

There are, of course, always a considerable number in

the infirmary. A surgeon and two physicians are attached to their service, in this as well as the two other houses founded by the same benevolent ecclesiastic.

The inmates in this Institution are for the most part "*les indigens de la ville;*" but middle-class patients are also received on paying a moderate sum annually, being accommodated with a private room. The former are paid for, by the parochial authorities by whom they are sent. The cost of each inmate is estimated at 75 centimes (about 7*d.*) per diem.

To all these houses a separate *corps de bâtiment* is attached for the reception of *pensionnaires*, or boarders, who enjoy the tranquillity, respectability, and privileges inseparable from a residence in such close vicinity to a religious community, at a very moderate expense; and as no "profits" are sought, the little income thus realised, after paying expenses, goes to increase the fund which supports the poorer inmates.

The care of the *Aliénés* of both classes is committed entirely to the Sisters; and though there are servants, their duties are confined to the *gros ouvrages*, in which they are superintended by the Sisters, and assisted by such of the inmates as are sufficiently sane to be employed.

Everything that is personal to the patients is done for them by the Sisters; this, indeed, is part of their vow, and even the cooking for them comes within the province of the nuns.

They are *Hospitalières* of the order of St. Augustine, sixteen in number, at this house, and eight at the *Couvent St. Joseph*,—a similar Institution for the reception of patients of the upper class at Cortenbergh, near Brussels.

In consequence of the nature and variety of their employments, these nuns have been permitted by episcopal authority to reverse the white habit and black scapular for a black habit and white scapular. They are all Flemish

but one, who is a young Englishwoman not yet professed.

Besides the Chanoine himself, who says mass daily here, there is a chaplain at each house ; all the inmates who are in any degree able, attending the services, and rarely behaving otherwise than remarkably well.

At Cortenbergh, are received one hundred patients of the higher class, on wonderfully moderate terms, 25*l.* per quarter securing every comfort and luxury. The greatest secrecy is maintained respecting them, and, excepting by special introduction, no person is admitted among them. Those of the town itself, or its vicinity, are never, under any circumstances, allowed to visit the wards. A special attendant, always a *réligieuse*, can be devoted to the service of an individual patient, if desired. The patients are also removed from one Institution to the other, according to the season of the year, that they may enjoy the advantage of the change ; and carriages are provided, in which they daily take the air. In order that their attention may not be too long fixed on any one subject, they are allowed all the various occupations in which ordinary persons employ themselves ; vocal and instrumental music, drawing, fancy-work, walks in the extensive grounds surrounding the Institution, and other similar *délassemens*. The poorer inmates are provided with suitable occupation in like variety.

There is another of these Institutions under the same direction, called *Couvent de St. Anne*, near Courtrai. The arrangements are precisely similar.

Round the *corps de bâtiment* appropriated to the *Aliénés*, runs a cloister opening with arches into the garden which belongs to them. Being fine bright weather, a great number of the patients were seated on the benches which are fixed against the wall, others on chairs, and many in the garden itself ; some were occupied with needlework or

lace-making, others were conversing together, and some were walking or playing; a few looked wild, and several seemed in a passive state of melancholy tranquillity.

As we entered, we observed a little knot of the patients collected in one spot, and giving way to rather noisy demonstrations of mirth and hilarity, the cause of which proved to be the costume of a party of Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul who had come to visit the Institution, and whose large white caps, being new to them, had greatly attracted their attention, and appeared to create no small degree of merriment, in which the Sisters of Charity themselves heartily joined. Most of them nodded familiarly as we passed, and seemed pleased to be noticed or addressed. They all appeared conscious of the presence of the Mother Superior, who accompanied us, and saluted her as we walked through the various rooms. Some asked her for snuff, of which they are very fond, and held out the backs of their hands for it; as she always carries a boxful in her pocket, their requests were soon complied with. All these, she told us, were quite harmless.

In a large room within, was another detachment under the surveillance of a Sister, sitting very quietly, occupied at different kinds of work, but chiefly lace-making. The most part of these had quite the appearance of sane persons. They seemed gratified when we stopped to admire the result of their industry, which is sold for their own benefit. One among these, who was not employed, called to us to stop, and then asked if we did not know who her parents were, and immediately added, "Je sais, moi, que nous serons tous jugés par Dieu après notre mort."

There were several patients in the infirmary; and many who were idiots, were seated in chairs with a table fixed in front, like children. The dormitories were like those of other hospitals, and two Sisters sleep in each. Those who are given to somnambulism, or who are subject to

fits, have a separate dormitory. There are a number of private apartments for the pensioners who pay, and who seem to be respectable middle-class persons. The charge is very moderate. They have also a garden of their own, nicely laid out, and much more extensive than that of the ordinary inmates.

In one of the private rooms was a melancholy case of a young girl of nineteen, one of two sisters co-heiresses to a very handsome fortune. She had been in the house twelve years, having become insane from a sudden fright when at school. She and her companions were playing at "hide-and-seek" in a large garden, when, running into a retired corner to conceal herself, she fell into a well which had inadvertently been left uncovered, and of the existence of which she was not aware. When taken out, she was found to be in a fit, from which she never returned to consciousness.

A Sister, who seemed to take great interest in her, was sitting with her, and said she varied very much; that sometimes she was cheerful and chatty, though quite childish, but that she was subject to periodical attacks, for some days preceding which she remained perfectly silent, immoveable, and unconscious. This, she said, was one of her *mauvais jours*, — that these fits returned more and more frequently; and the medical men were of opinion that one of them would carry her off. She sat in a fauteuil opposite us, looking fixedly, but apparently not in the least aware of our presence, and taking no notice when we addressed her. I never saw a look of such completely unmeaning vacancy.

They are all treated with the greatest humanity and gentleness, and force is rarely if ever employed. The consequence is, that they are excessively fond of the Sisters, and seem to obey them from motives of love and gratitude. The kitchen is attended to by the Sisters. The farm and

gardens are worked by the male patients, under the surveillance of keepers. Those we saw occupied in these avocations looked not only contented but interested in their employment. Two, who were sawing wood, were assisted by one of the keepers.

The chapel is small, but they have made the most of it. Though very damp and sadly out of repair, they are unable to restore it under their present tenure, and the parish (to whom it belongs) cannot be persuaded to go to the necessary expense of making it watertight.

Ste. Godeliève, the patron saint of Bruges, has a shrine here. Over it, is a picture of her martyrdom. She is kneeling in a white dress, while two executioners are in the act of strangling her. The history of this saint runs thus: —She was born at Boulogne in the middle of the eleventh century, and was married at an early age to a Flemish nobleman named Bertulph. On the very day of their marriage he took so violent a dislike to her that the rest of her life was one series of persecutions, which she bore with the most Christian meekness and resignation. At length he caused her to be put to death by two of his servants, and her body was thrown into a well at Ghistelles, a small village near Furnes. The spot is much visited by pilgrims.

Bertulph, after her death, was miraculously brought to a sense of his wrongs towards her, and leading a penitent and mortified life, afterwards received canonisation himself.

To the Benedictine Convent, a house containing twenty-seven nuns, inclusive of lay-Sisters, and also called "*Dames de Ste. Godeliève.*" This is one of a great number of reforms of the original order said to have been founded by St. Scolastica, sister to St. Benedict.

We were shown into the *parloir*, where hung a picture of St. Scolastica. In one side of the room was the *grille*—

rather a small one, about three feet square — close, black, and *hérissée* with iron spikes, about six inches long, on the outside. Within hung a dark green curtain. The Mother Superior and a Sister, both elderly women, and *Flamandes*, soon came, and, partly drawing aside the curtain, seated themselves at their side of the opening, requesting us to be seated on ours.

They seemed rather annoyed at our inability to speak Flemish; but, as they were conversant enough with French to make themselves understood, we got on pretty tolerably.

Father Ignatius gave them some particulars of the rule of his order, originally the same as theirs, but now each partaking of the peculiarities of their respective reformers. One difference in practice is, that whereas the nuns retire to rest at eight in the evening, and rise again at eleven, returning to bed from two till four in the morning, the monks rise once for all at half-past two, when they repair to the choir for the same purpose. The nuns, after their second rising, have an hour's meditation in the chapel, mass, and then the Divine office, not breakfasting till half-past eight; they dine at twelve, which is their last meal. Indeed during a considerable portion of the year it is their only one, as from the 14th of September to the feast of Easter, the early meal is suspended. As regards abstinence from meat, all the *Réformes* are agreed, and likewise as to the duration of their vows, which in all cases are *usque ad mortem*. They keep cows, and it is the Sisters who attend to the dairy. They make butter for sale, as well as for their own consumption, — *lait battu*, and *crême bouillie*, which I fancy must mean clotted cream. It is considered a great delicacy, and meets with ready purchasers; for whenever a dinner is given in Bruges, it is a desideratum with the host to provide a dish of this esteemed condiment for his guests.

They have one servant, or rather *commissionaire*, for the only service she renders them is that of going messages. They never see her, and the only communication of any kind which passes between them is by means of the *tour*.

As is the case in many other convents, they receive boarders, whose *pension* contributes to the support of the house; but they never see the Sisters, unless occasion requires an interview, and then their intercourse is held through the *grille*.

As we rose to go, the nuns asked F. Ignatius for his blessing; when he had pronounced which, he told them he should now expect they would give him their intention at communion next morning, as he thought he was entitled to a reciprocity of good offices; and to this bargain they willingly assented.

They invited us to look at their chapel before we left, which we did. It is large, and handsomely fitted up; paved with black and white marble, and several pictures of Benedictine nuns adorn the walls. On the north side of the sanctuary is a spiked *grille*, behind which the nuns are placed during mass. The *chœur*, where they chant the office, is a large room or gallery, curtained off, at the west end of the chapel.

CHAP. IV.

I WENT this afternoon to vespers at the chapel of the *Carmes Déchaussés*, in the Rue des Baudets, where there was a large gathering of persons. The office was being chanted in the chapter-room behind the altar; two panels on either side the altar, and at some height above it, being open, to give admission to the sound. This lasted about twenty minutes, and then appeared Père Ignace in the white cloth habit of his order, with a pointed cowl hanging down behind, and a black skull-cap. He also wore a very rich stole of gold-watered llama cloth.

The sermon, which was in English, as announced, was on the Gospel for last Sunday (14th after Pentecost), and treated of the incalculable instances of God's goodness to man, and the corresponding love and gratitude which ought to be shown by man in consideration of so many favours and graces received. Our sense of God's mercies could be best expressed by Love, Confidence, and Gratitude. On these virtues he dilated with much warmth and eloquence, plainly showing that he felt and appreciated the view he pointed out to his hearers.

The sermon was followed by "Benediction." The hymns and anthems were the "Salutaris Hostia," "Salve Regina," a Hymn to St. Joseph, "Exaudiat Dominus," Ave Maria, and another I did not recognise.

After service having waited at the door by appointment for F. Ignatius, he soon came out, accompanied by one of the Brothers, who had kindly offered to conduct us to the Carmelite convent for women, situated close by.

Having reached the extremity of a long corridor, we

were ushered into the parlour where, the rule being severe, the *grille* was close, double, and spiked as at the Benedictine Convent, in addition to which, the curtain which hangs behind is never removed even to talk to a woman, and the nun who addresses you wears a veil before her face.

A complete *mort au siècle* it certainly is; and as one sits talking with the invisible owner of the voice, which speaks, as it were, from another world, it is difficult to realise her personality; one seems to be holding converse with an abstraction—a *vox et præterea nihil*. While waiting for the appearance—no, I must say the arrival—of the *Mère Sous-prieure*, as she is called here, I was much amused by the conversation of the two monks, who continued bantering each other with the greatest good humour, showing themselves by no means deficient in *esprit*.

At length we were made aware of the presence of the lady, who placed herself on the other side of the *grille*, and to whom F. Ignatius observed, that he thought the arrangement hardly a fair one, as he believed, although we could not see her, she could very well distinguish us. This charge, however, she disclaimed, assuring us she could only discern, sufficiently to know whether she were addressing a gentleman or a lady. The *Père Carmélite* was obliged to give some little explanation of our presence, and our wish to make her acquaintance, which she received in silence; but when he introduced F. Ignatius as a Trappist monk, she made no attempt to disguise the delight with which she heard the information.

The effect was talismanic. They immediately entered into a brisk and animated colloquy, and soon found a point of common interest, in the reciprocal devotion of their respective orders, for St. Teresa and St. Bernard. After some conversation on the subject, it was mutually agreed that they should endeavour to prevail on their Superiors to interchange the intentions of their respective

masses on the two days dedicated to these saints; an idea which appeared to afford infinite satisfaction to both. After naming St. Teresa as the reformer of this order, it would be superfluous to allude to the severity of the rule; nevertheless, I may mention, that there is much similarity between the practice of the Carmes and that of the Trappists, a fact which seemed to be, in some measure, new, both to the Mother Superior and Father Ignatius themselves, as the different instances were elicited during their conversation.

In this house there are twenty nuns, some being lay-sisters. The number is limited to twenty-one. They meet at meals and also during "recreation," which is confined to two hours daily, when the rule of silence, which is stringent at all other times, is withdrawn.

During the remainder of the day each nun remains alone in her own cell, where her occupation consists of prayer, meditation, working for the poor, and also working for payment in order to contribute to the support of the house.

At nine o'clock every evening they retire to the chapel, and pass two hours before the Blessed Sacrament. At eleven they retire to rest, changing their habit for a "*costume de nuit*" of similar material. They rise at half-past four, are allowed a light breakfast at ten, which on days of abstinence is limited to two ounces of dry bread. At six o'clock they have another meal, but never eat meat; and on days of abstinence as well as during the whole of the long Lent, or from the 14th of September to Easter day, are interdicted the use of eggs, butter, and milk. During that time, everything is dressed with oil and vinegar, and they are limited to one meal.

If, by the doctor's order, one sister is obliged to eat meat, she either dines alone, or her plate is boarded off from the rest of the table.

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday they have only a small piece of dry bread through the whole day. On those occasions they likewise attend chapel barefoot, and there spend nearly the whole of those days. They are even divested of the sandals they wear at other times.

They are, of course, closely cloistered, and never go out under any circumstances, but take exercise in a large garden belonging to the Convent. The lay-sisters follow the same rule, the difference being that they do not sing in the choir, and they perform the work of the house, the nuns superintending the several departments. Thus, one arranges the linen and needlework; another is *Infirmière*, another *Sacristaine*, and so on.

Even the *Sœur Tourière*, when she of necessity communicates with persons external to the order, speaks to them only through a hole in the *tour;* and the nuns assist at mass behind a spiked grille north of the chancel. The chapel, which we saw, is plain but very neat, and, being painted white, looks fresh and cheerful, and the decorations are remarkably chaste. The sacristy is likewise arranged with much care and precision.

The order of Carmelite nuns, an off-shoot of the ancient Carmes, has existed since the time of Jean Soreth, twenty-sixth general of the order, who in 1452 obtained for it from Nicolas V. the necessary privileges, and founded five houses for the reception of nuns, virgins, widows, and Béguines.

It is from one of these convents that rose the third, and unquestionably the most efficacious reform of the order, — women embracing without hesitation, and retaining without flinching, austerities which from time to time have caused men to succumb.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, Theresa of Cepeda, who at the age of two-and-twenty, had taken the veil in the monastery of Avila, in Spain, pursued the idea of sub-

mitting her order to a radical reform. Not considering, however, that the rule of the patriarch Albert, explained by Innocent IV., answered her purpose, she added a certain number of constitutions which rendered these observances yet more stringent.

To go barefoot (*i. e.* wearing only sandals) was a practice strictly enforced; and St. Teresa did not even allow herself this modification. Obedience was exacted with so much rigour, that if an *impossible* command had been given, it would have been necessary to *attempt* it; for she impressed upon them, that the voice of the Superior was the voice of God.

Poverty was so scrupulously observed, that these nuns obtained from the Pope a stipulation that they should possess neither lands nor revenues, but should subsist entirely on alms.

Three times a week they voluntarily scourged themselves with the "discipline."

Those who broke silence exposed themselves to the heaviest penalties; and their habitually severe rule of fasting was enhanced by the numerous accessory mortifications with which they voluntarily accompanied it.

Under their rough, coarse, habit, they wore hair-shirts, in which were woven knots, or small lumps of lead.

Surpassingly severe as was this rule, St. Teresa succeeded in thus reforming seventeen convents of women and fifteen of men. From Spain, where it flourished in all its splendour, it spread into Italy, France, Flanders, and all the provinces of Christendom.

The introduction of these Carmelites into France is due to the united efforts of Cardinal de Berulle and Madame Acarie.

As our way back lay through the Rue des Baudets, and over the bridge of the same name, and which might, therefore, be translated "*pons asinorum*," we thought we

might as well pay a visit to the *Carmes Déchaussês, en passant.* So we rang the great bell and inquired for our humorous friend again, who was nothing loth to show us the arcana of the monastery, no objection being made to those who present themselves with a proper introduction, except in the case of ladies, who are excluded, under pain of excommunication, from all religious houses of men. The word *clôture*, painted in large letters, usually indicates to the fair visitors, the limit beyond which their presence is a forbidden pleasure.

Our good-humoured conductor expressed himself desirous we should see everything, and seemed to pique himself on having all, cleaner and in better order than the Capuchins. He took us, first, into the chapter-room or choir, a large lofty hall immediately behind the chapel.

Dos-à-dos to the high altar is another altar, at which mass is said daily. A bench goes all round the wall, and above are a series of relievos forming the centres of panels, representing the stations. In the middle stands a desk; and it is here all the offices are sung; the sound entering the chapel through the openings on either side the altar.

The young priests all say their first mass privately at this altar in the chapter-room, before saying it in public at any of the chapel altars.

We next passed into the sacristy, which one of the brothers was engaged in mopping. Here the *Frère Sacristain* came forward, and exhibited with some pride the gorgeous altar and other vestments, of which they have a magnificent collection. They are kept, with the greatest care, in a spacious oak press, appropriated to their service, and fitted with slides, on which each one reposes in its full size, covered with large wraps. The altar linen is likewise kept here, and is very fine, and delicately embroidered. All this, and especially perhaps the vestments of the priests, forms a striking contrast with the bare and

poverty-stricken appearance of these coarsely habited and barefooted monks when not serving the altar.

" C'est bien cela," said the *Sacristain* on my expressing to him this feeling, " tout ce qu'il y a de plus grossier pour nous autres ; mais quand il s'agit du Bon Dieu et de Son Eglise, alors—cela doit être toute autre chose."

The dormitories are formed by separate cells opening out of a long, brick-floored, corridor, and are as simple as can well be imagined. There is no linen on the beds, and they sleep in the same habit they wear during the day. Indeed, there is no change in its texture or weight all the year through.

The library is extensive, and open to the use of all the brothers. Among the collection I observed various editions of the Bible, and many commentaries. There is also one case under lock and key, labelled " *Livres Interdits.*" Among these, stood conspicuous the works of Gibbon.

There is a common room, besides the refectory, in which they are at liberty to meet during their two hours of *recreation*, and where they are allowed bagatelle and other games. In this room they showed us a skull, which they said was that of a devout Catholic who died in the monastery, intending to profess himself a Carmelite. Unhappily his bodily strength did not correspond to the warmth of his vocation, and he never succeeded in inuring his constitution to the hardships and austerities he was yet willing and desirous to practise. The house is very extensive, and there are a considerable number of rooms appropriated to the use of guests, for hospitality is a Christian virtue understood and still practised in monastic life.

Their obligations, besides those which bind them to a contemplative life, comprise visiting the sick, among whom, in times of cholera and other epidemics, they have

been known to render invaluable service,—being ready to attend upon any patient who may send for them, at any hour of the day or night, preaching when and wherever they may be needed, and hearing confessions.

The rule is one of much austerity, and of course very much resembles that of the nuns of the same order. As regards the prohibition against eating meat, and the restriction ordinarily to two meals, and in Lent to one meal a day—the same regulation prevails. With respect to sleep, however, the brothers have the advantage in point of ease, as they are allowed seven hours; rising at four in summer and at five in winter.

This indulgence has been made in their favour in consideration of the laborious nature of their occupations, which, though chiefly mental, are not on that account less exhausting.

There are at present twenty-two brothers in this monastery, but as they change about with the occupants of the houses at Ghent and Courtrai, the number varies.

There seems to exist much uncertainty as to the origin of the Carmes, which some trace to a very remote period, insisting that Elias was their founder, while others attribute this honour to Berthold, a valiant knight of the army of Godfrey of Bouillon, and a native of Calabria, who is supposed to have consecrated himself to a monastic life, after the second Crusade, with six others who joined him in his pious design.

In 1209, Albert, patriarch of Jerusalem, gave to this incipient community, a rule consisting of sixteen Articles, greatly resembling that of the Trappists. Honorius III., in 1224, confirmed this rule, which appears to have been in a great measure taken from the writings of St. Basil. Its tenor would seem to imply that they were hermits living in separate cells.

After the peace made with the Saracens in 1229, the

Carmes, who had endured many fierce persecutions, decided on abandoning the Holy Land for the west of Europe, to seek an asylum which would afford them liberty to carry out their pious observances.

From the island of Cyprus and Sicily, where they first touched in 1238, they soon advanced to France and England. Everywhere they were received with open arms, and no sooner had they transplanted themselves to a more genial soil, than they began to give every sign of life and power. In 1260, St. Louis gave them a house in Paris, whence issued the Carmelites of France and Germany; but with their change of climate had also come a necessary change of organization and habits; consequently, in 1247, Innocent IV. gave them a modified rule, better adapted to the exigencies of their altered condition.

Their eremitical life was changed into a cenobitical state, and they were exonerated from the obligation to build their convents in solitudes. To the vow of obedience was added that of chastity, which had until then only been inferred; but whatever mitigations of the rule were suffered, it still continued to stand on its primitive basis.

The Carmelites held their first general chapter in England in 1245; and since that time, thanks to the indefatigable activity of their general, Simon Stock, and to the protection of Innocent IV., the order has increased with surprising rapidity.

Unhappily, in the fourteenth century, the schism which rent the Church created divisions in this order also. The two opposing parties elected each a vicar-general, neither having regard to the character of him they chose, but basing their preference on the warmth with which he favoured the pretensions of the Pope they respectively acknowledged.

Each of these generals, influenced by circumstances, frequently dispensed his monks from the austerities of the

rule, and never dared to assert his authority, lest, irritated by his severity, those whom he had affronted should throw themselves into the interests of the opposite party. Hence resulted so great a disorder that the Carmes were no longer to be recognised by any distinction but that of their habit. The spirit of the order, once so exact in its observances, seemed to have evaporated.

This disastrous state of affairs lasted until 1430, when, after the holding of a chapter-general, its members began seriously to think of restoring the order to its pristine perfection.

As it was rightly judged that there would not only be imprudence but difficulty, in passing from one extreme to the other, they came to the resolution of soliciting from the Sovereign Pontiff some modification of the original rule regarding fasting, abstinence from flesh-meat, and continual residence within their cells. In answer to this application, Eugenius IV. granted to the Carmelites permission to eat meat three times a week, and to take their meals in a common refectory: he further mitigated the severity of the rule of silence, and suffered them to walk in their garden, cloisters, and other departments of their *clôture*, at proper hours, and when not hindered by religious exercises or other practices peculiar to the community.

These alleviations, however, were not adopted in all their monasteries: many preferred living up to the primitive rule, and observing it in all its rigour; these were called *Observants*, in opposition to those who followed the lighter discipline, who were called *Conventuels*.

The concessions allowed by Pope Eugene were not by any means productive of good results; but rather augmented the evil they were intended to remedy, as they tended to facilitate further infractions of the rule. This consideration determined John Soreth, seventy-sixth general of the order, to undertake a second reform of his

institution, and to submit it to additional exercises; but, although Paul III. gave his approbation to the scheme in 1466, his efforts were so ill received by the monks, that, in order to be rid of his surveillance, they gave him poison in some mulberries. In his time the choir-brothers wore black, and the lay-brothers brown or tan-coloured cloth. He exchanged the former for the latter, as much because it had been the original colour, as from motives of humility. To him the order was indebted for the first foundation of Carmelite nuns, as it is supposed the idea originated with him in 1452, when he obtained for them from Nicolas V. the same privileges as those accorded to the monks, and founded five houses of women, saying, that it could not be right that an order instituted in honour of the Blessed Virgin, mother of virgins, should have none in it to honour her.

This was the last visit I was to pay with F. Ignatius, and truly sorry was I, our companionship had come to an end. The disasters and adventures of our yesterday's pilgrimage had perhaps contributed to make us better acquainted with each other, than would an ordinary intercourse of the same duration, which had not been varied and illustrated by the drollery and little traits of character which circumstances elicited.

He returns early to-morrow to his presbytery in Leicestershire, and in all probability we shall never meet again in this world. Be this as it may, we have both, I think, satisfactorily and advantageously employed the time we have spent in each other's company; and, as far as I am concerned, I feel I have made a long step in the knowledge of monastic discipline and practice, on which I was seeking enlightenment.

Thursday, Sept. 6th. — To the Cathedral at half-past seven, where High Mass was being said as on Sunday. It was in the Lady Chapel; the altar was profusely illumi-

nated; the priest and deacons wore white vestments; and though the orchestra was not full, the music was very grand, and sounded remarkably well, as it rung through the noble arches. The congregation, too, was numerous, nearly filling the apse. High Mass, I understand, is always said on Thursdays as well as on Sundays in parish churches.

Outside the church-door, among the printed papers pasted up, I saw several black-bordered notices asking for the prayers of the faithful for the repose of the souls of persons recently deceased. Like all other public notices here, they were indited in Flemish, and were headed with a death's head and cross bones, under which stood, in large letters, "Heden my, Morgen gy."

After breakfast I went to the church of S. Walburg, which I had been told was very fine; and so perhaps it might be considered by lovers of the pseudo-classical style.

The masses were over, though two candles remained lighted on Our Lady's altar.

At the church-door stood a large waggon, drawn by two powerful horses, laden with long loaves. Two men were unloading it, and transferring it by means of large baskets into the church. Here it was received by a third, who proceeded to arrange it along a shelf or counter, behind which he stood, piling it as high as his own head.

I made out from his signs, rather than from his Flemish answers, that it was to be distributed to the poor at eleven o'clock; but it was impossible to ascertain from him how often this event happens.

I understood from another informant that it is the custom in Belgium to give away bread at funerals, or immediately after the burial. Perhaps it may be in consequence of the wishes of the deceased, who may in this way desire to insure the prayers of those whom his charity relieves.

I was told a curious fact the other day respecting mourning in Belgium, which it appears is only worn for

a deceased relative, by those survivors to whom he has bequeathed legacies, or whose circumstances have in some way been benefited by his death; so that it is by no means uncommon for persons to be congratulated, the moment they appear in black, upon the inheritance they are imagined to have acquired; and the amount of which is supposed to correspond with the depth of the crape worn on the occasion.

It is also impossible to avoid remarking the extraordinary length of the veils, the women carry on their bonnets when in mourning. Weeds, however, would seem not to be the fashion, and are, I think, seldom, if ever, seen out of England, unless round the face of an English widow, where it must be confessed they form a by no means unbecoming *entourage*. Foreign widows, perhaps, do not think it necessary to announce the fact of their condition to every passer-by.

Walked across the "Park" to-day to the new church of the Madeleine—a brick structure, but in very good taste;—late Romanesque with apsidal terminus; pitch lofty, but well proportioned. The mouldings and capitals are of stone, and nicely sculptured, but the bases of the columns are of dark granite. The walls within, and the roof are at present bare brick, but are to receive some rich mural decoration as soon as sufficient funds have been collected. The church is calculated to hold about 1500 persons.

The transepts are short, and the aisles go beyond them, so as to leave room for fourth and fifth east altars.

The transept-altars and retables, which are very costly, being exquisitely carved in subjects, painted and gilt, are the work of M. Gherts of Louvain, lately deceased. The designs are by Mr. King, a convert from Oxford, residing here. They, as well as the font, of dark, polished granite, are the offering of Mr. Eyre, also a resident

in Bruges, and a munificent benefactor to all works of charity.

In a niche over the south transept-altar is a very graceful group, in stone, of the Blessed Virgin and Infant Saviour, which I understood to be the work of M. Geefs.

Before this church was built, the parishioners were dependent on the Vieille Madeleine, a small chapel belonging to the *Hospice civil*, under that dedication. This has now been in use, in its present unfinished state, for about two years.

The Curé was absent, but his *locum tenens* was exceedingly polite in showing me all parts of the building—uncovering all the sculptures and ornamental portions.

To the *Béguinage*, which stands quite alone on the other side of a bridge crossing the canal, and leading out of the town. It is inclosed within an extensive mural enceinte, and is entered by a fortress-like gateway. It might be considered a village apart, the houses which compose it standing more or less scattered round an irregular plot of green turf, in the centre of which is the chapel.

The dwellings are very neat, being all scrupulously clean, with whitewashed walls and green doors and window-shutters, surrounded by little gardens. Some of them are small, and are occupied by not more than two or three *Béguines;* while others admit a much larger number, and in that case, they are called convents, or religious communities, within the Béguinage. They observe a rule, and have private hours of devotion, besides those which find them in chapel.

They come under the denomination of *Congrégations séculières*, and do not appear to make any actual vows. They are certainly *not* bound "*usque ad mortem*" to any of the practices they observe or the works of charity they perform, which latter are left to their own discretion. Neither does there seem to be much self-denial, nor therefore much merit, in their adoption of this mode of life;

but they are interesting, inasmuch as they are a pure relic of Mediæval times, their observances having undergone no change of any kind since their first institution.

It is generally supposed that this community and the two at Ghent, known as the "*Grand*" and "*Petit Béguinage*," are the only specimens remaining of the numerous congregations of *Béguines* with which Flanders was once sprinkled; but this is quite a vulgar error. It is true Belgium is now the only country where *Béguines* exist; but there is scarcely a town within its precincts, which has not its *Béguinage*. Some are considerably reduced as to the number of occupants, and others have had their territory invaded, and portions of it—in some few cases the whole—seized and appropriated to other uses; so that these three may rightly be considered the most perfect remnants of the original foundations, though by no means all that are worth visiting.

Those of Malines and Antwerp, though now not boasting more than about fifty sisters, once were by far the most remarkable in Belgium; the former (about a century back) contained no fewer than 1600 *Béguines*, and at the same period there was still a very flourishing *Béguinage* at Amsterdam. It was no uncommon circumstance in early times to find two or more churches within their enclosures, according to the number of their inhabitants.

Though traced to a very early period, there still seems to hang some doubt over the origin of these communities. Some historiographers give them *Sainte Begghe*, or *Begga*, for their foundress, which would carry it back as far as the seventh century. Others, again, attribute their existence to Lambert le Bégue, who lived towards the end of the twelfth, and who received this sobriquet from an imperfection in his organs of speech. That which seems most probable is, that the order of *Béguines* existed under another name before the time of Lambert, but that having been reformed by him, they received and retained the name

which had been given to him. Certain it is, that it was he who added the vow of celibacy to their other sacred undertakings, and enforced it both by counsel and example. Rikel, in his History of the Béguines of Flanders, says: "*Lambertus, le Bégue, quia balbus erat, de Sancto Christophoro dicebatur; a cujus cognomine, mulieres et puellæ quæ castè vivere proponunt, "Beguines" gallicè cognominantur, quia primus extitit qui eis premium castitatis verbo et exemplo prædicavit.*"

It is supposed by some, that Nivelles was the spot where existed the first *Béguinage*, and that there was the *Maison Mère* from which sprung all the rest. Aubert le Mire affirms that Lambert le Bégue, who, it seems, was possessed of much wealth, founded at Liége two *congrégations*, —one of men, in 1150, and the other of *Béguines*, in 1173. This statement is confirmed by Coëns, Canon of Antwerp, who wrote in 1630, and who tells us that the former of these were popularly called by derision *coquins*, and that their originator gave them a house and a foundation: "*Sidem Leodienses pios viros, quibus Lambertus noster domum et fundum concesserat, 'Coquinos' appellarunt.*"

In Belgium they at one time reached as many as 5000.

Louis XI. introduced them into France; but they did not spread there to so great an extent as is supposed, having been often confounded by writers, not conversant with all their peculiarities, with the sisters of the third order of St. Francis.

In Germany they likewise became a body of some magnitude, but having fallen into extravagant notions, teaching that it was possible to attain to perfection in this life, to live in a state of impeccability, and to enjoy an uninterrupted sight of God,—in short, to reach so eminent a degree of contemplative sanctity, that abstinence, fasting, and obedience to the direction of mortal men were no

longer necessary, — the council of Vienna, in 1113, condemned these errors, and abolished the *Béguines* as dangerous and heretical.

According to Père Thomassin, Philippe le Bel, who had never been very favourable to the Béguines in his own dominions, seized upon this pretext to abolish the order in France, although no similar accusation could be brought against them. Notwithstanding this persecution, some of them escaped his notice, and survived in that country till the end of the sixteenth century.

Their regulations are very simple; but although they are not bound with the same stringency as other orders, there is a certain amount of surveillance exercised over them, and their vows are sacred as long as they last.

There is, in each house, a prioress or mistress, without whose permission they can never go out.

When they enter the order, they simply make their vow in the presence of the *curé*, in whose parish the *Béguinage* is situated, in these terms: "I. N.—— promise to you, my parish priest, and to the magistrates at this present or any future time being, to maintain obedience and chastity so long as I shall continue a member of this Béguinage."

The noviciate lasts three years; at the end of which time, they receive the habit. Formerly they admitted various colours in the costume; some wearing grey, some brown, and some sky-blue. Now, however, and for more than two centuries past, they have all adopted the black dress.

The curate of the parish is the Supérieur; and in deliberations on the affairs of the society no vote is carried without a council of at least eight *Béguines*.

To the *Maison des Sœurs de St. Vincent de Paul.* This is an affiliation of the original order, the Maison Mère of which is in the Rue du Bac in Paris. The

mention I made of my acquaintance with the *Rev. Mère Supérieure* there, was an instantaneous password. Indeed, I have always had occasion to mark the "*esprit de corps*," which seems to animate the members of this particular order, although (amounting to as many as 12,000) they are more numerous than any other, and are composed of women of all nations and languages. Notwithstanding this, they form a large family, every component individual of which feels an interest in, and attachment for, every other, whether personally acquainted or not, out of love and veneration doubtless for their common parent, whose most marked characteristic and acting principle was that very love which his name alone (and that after a lapse of 200 years) is sufficient to command. There are several other religious communities who have placed themselves under the patronage of the same venerable saint, and notably one of Belgian origin, already extending fast in Belgium, though only recently founded by M. le Chanoine Triest. But this, though a very valuable and meritorious order, must not be confounded with the "*vraies filles de St. Vincent*," as they love to denominate themselves, and who, besides their peculiar dress, have other sufficiently distinguishing features.

The sisters here are nine in number, and are thus distributed: one is the superior, three undertake visiting the sick *à domicile*, one superintends the *pharmacie*, two take charge of the children in the *salle d'asile*, one superintends the *cuisine* and *ménage*, and one has the care of the orphanage.

The first department into which we were conducted by a young novice, who then left us to fetch the *mère supérieure*, was the *salle d'asile*. It is a separate building on the other side of a neat garden, which occupies a quadrangle at the back. It is a recent addition to the house, and was built, and is maintained by a legacy from a lady

who died here a few years since. It accommodates 300 children, boys and girls, who are received from the age of eighteen months to that of seven years.

They come every day at half-past eight, and remain till five o'clock. In the winter they have their dinner supplied to them, but in summer they bring it with them.

The two Sisters who were engaged with these minute specimens of humanity, seemed endowed with a wonderful stock of patience, and decidedly needed it. One was French, the other German, and both quite young; the former, we were told, was a *demoiselle noble*.

The little folks were ranged on what they appropriately term *les degrés*, or graduated seats, reaching nearly to the top of the room, and were managed in the most silent and noiseless way by means of the wooden "signals" which are used throughout Belgium. These signals deserve special mention, as there is no doubt, could they be introduced in England, they would be a great boon to schoolmasters and mistresses. They not only obviate the exertion of perpetual verbal communication, in a tone of greater or less command, but they intimate a tacit understanding that the very nod of the master is to be followed by instant and simultaneous obedience on the part of the pupils. The sound given by this magical little instrument is so gentle as to be scarcely audible to any but a practised ear; and yet so thoroughly well trained are these young children to catch its summons and interpret its meaning, that one's own attention is first called to its whispered "click" by the corresponding action of the children, who by its means are set in motion, or put to rest as if by clockwork.

The signal itself is very simple in construction, consisting only of two small pieces of boxwood, neatly turned, and connected by a thread of catgut, so that when one

shuts upon the other, a soft but sufficiently sharp sound is given to attract the attention of an active-minded child.

The frequency of the stroke, or its force, can be increased at pleasure. The signal has quite a language of its own; and there is a book published for the use of the schools in which it is used to initiate both teacher and pupil into its mysteries.

They are by no means easily to be obtained, being only made for the *Frères des écoles*, and therefore sold only through or by them. By means of this signal, the Sister put all the little beings through their exercises, which they executed with great alacrity, precision, and intelligence.

The chapel is small, being only a room fitted up; but it is very prettily decorated, and Mass is said daily. The offices are also said here by the Sisters.

Attached to the house is a ward for twenty-two orphans; but the foundation is not rich enough to support them, and their expences for maintenance, education, clothing, and—when they reach the age of one and twenty—apprenticing such as do not go to service, is undertaken by some benevolent persons, who contribute the larger portion, the remainder being supplied by the proceeds of their own needlework.

Besides all this, there is a soup-kitchen, whence a large number of poor are supplied with a hot meal daily during the winter months. The pharmacie is no unimportant department in the houses of St. Vincent. It not only supplies the inmates, but serves as a dispensary for the poor of the parish; and these Sisters receive such a thorough medical training that they are not only competent to make up medicines, but even to prescribe in ordinary cases, and actually perform many surgical operations.

The *Filles de St. Vincent* have only been established here within the last two years. This order is so popular all over the Continent, that its history is pretty

generally diffused; and wherever it is known, the zeal and self-devotion of its founder, the great and good St. Vincent, and his meritorious coadjutrix Mad^elle^., or more properly Madame, Le Gras, have been deservedly extolled, and sometimes happily emulated.

It began in a very small way at St. Nicolas du Chardonnet, where Louise Le Gras was residing, and was the result of a sermon preached by St. Vincent at Chatillon, some years before, in which he happened to throw out an idea, which at once struck root, having been received with enthusiasm by all who heard his discourse. At first, however, it merely gave rise to an increase of almsgiving and acts of benevolence on the part of his hearers, the desultory nature of which precluded its durability, and it was only in 1633 that a plan was organised, a community formed, rules prescribed, and distinct duties appointed to it, receiving the unostentatious nomenclature of "*Sœurs Servantes des Pauvres.*"

The association of *Dames de St. Vincent de Paul*, now so active in Paris and elsewhere, dates from nearly as early a period, and, like the order itself, soon received some of the members of the noblest houses of those countries in which it was planted. So rapidly did this order increase, that in less than a hundred years from the time of its institution there were scattered throughout France, Poland, and the Low Countries, no fewer than 280 houses, containing jointly more than 1,500 sisters. At the present time the number they have attained is yet more astonishing, amounting as it does to 12,000; and there is no corner of the world, excepting always Great Britain, where the good "Sisters of St. Vincent" are not known, appreciated, and loved.

There are very stringent and wise regulations as to their admission into the order, to be eligible for which, their

own lives and those of their relatives must be without reproach.

They may bring a small dowry, from which is only taken sufficient to provide their first dress; the remainder, if any, is restored to them whenever they leave. After remaining six months in the *Séminaire* at the *Maison Mère*, wearing this dress, they are invested with that of the institution, and are gradually formed to exercises of piety, the observance of the rules, and the occupations followed by the rest. When they are sufficiently well practised in all that concerns their obligations, they are sent into towns or villages, according as they are needed. After their admission into the seminary, they go through a noviciate or trial of five years' duration, and are then permitted to take their vows for one year. These they are at liberty to renew each year, on the 25th of March, with the permission of their superiors.

CHAP. V.

To Benediction at the chapel of the "*Rédemptoristines*," or "*Sœurs Rouges.*" It is peculiar in construction, but rich, and at the same time remarkably chaste. The whole interior is of dazzling whiteness, except the altar, the elaborate sculpture of which is lavishly gilded; all round the chancel, above, are compartments filled with grilles, also painted white, behind which is the "*chœur*" of the Sisters, who themselves chant the service. The priest's vestments were sky blue, and of very costly embroidery, and the scarlet cassocks and caps, and blue silken sashes of the two "*enfans de chœur*," told with very striking effect, to which, perhaps, the wonderful freshness of the whole contributed not a little. The congregation was pretty numerous.

Having a letter of introduction for one of the Sisters, I went round to the convent gate, after Benediction, and rang the bell; a servant in ordinary peasant costume came to the little square grating in the door, for in this order the lay-sisters are cloistered as well as the nuns. Having communicated my errand, the gate was opened and admitted me into a passage, wide, open, and airy, exhibiting another door beyond, painted black, and padlocked. Round this was written, "*Bienheureux les pauvres d'esprit*," &c. This door is never opened, unless to give egress to the corpse of one of the inmates, or to admit a new postulant:

"Chè quel serraglio è con mirabil uso
Semprè all' entrar aperto, all' uscir chiuso."

But we may also infer that the recluse, "da se stessa si rinchiuda," since over the *grille* we read the following touching legend :—

"Ne plaignez pas mon doux esclavage,
Je m'enchaine à jamais, pour aimer davantage."

Indeed, in all the "postulants" who seek to enter religious orders, there is a degree of confidence and determination which can only be attributed to the certainty of their vocation. They seem to say, with Schiller's Joan of Arc :—

„Ein Zeichen hat der Himmel mir verheißen."

When a new Sister is to be admitted, all the Sisters already within the house come down to the threshold of this door, as she kneels on the steps, to receive and welcome her.

This order is a *pendant* to that of the Redemptorists (men), and owes its origin to the same founder. The costume is picturesque and quite unique: the dress scarlet, the scapular blue, and the hood white, as are also the shoes ; a black veil is thrown over the head ; each Sister wears on the breast an oval miniature painting of our Lord.

I was shown up a narrow oak staircase into the *parloir*, a small, simply furnished room, on one side of which was a not very large, close, double, black grille, with a shutter within it. The Sister for whom I had asked, soon came, accompanied by a second. She expressed herself pleased to see any one introduced by her brother, but contented herself with merely asking after his health. She said the rule forbade her to raise her veil except when talking to persons of her own sex, and indeed they did not *always* open the shutter.

She was very cheerful in her tone of speaking, and readily answered any questions I put to her. She told me their *retraite* began a day or two since, and they had a

réverend Père from the house of the *Rédemptoristes* at Tournay to preach to them. I told her I was acquainted with some of the "Fathers" at Douay, and knew the house there, which seemed to interest her much. Their occupations, she said, were similar in character to those of the Fathers, inasmuch as both practised missionary work, though their common end was gained by different roads; the one employing the external means of preaching, while the other adopted the more hidden but not less efficacious instrumentality of prayer.

Though closely cloistered, their rule is not so austere as that of some other orders. They may eat meat during certain seasons of the year; and they are, at no time, required to rise during the night to say matins. They retire to rest at eight or nine, and rise at four. The rule of silence, of course, they observe: prayer and meditation seem to form their chief occupation; but each takes her share in the domestic economy, and they do everything for themselves.

There are thirty-four Sisters in this house; a short time since they numbered forty-eight, upon which, as that is above the prescribed number, fourteen were drafted off to Brussels to form the nucleus of another house. There are no abbesses, each house being independent of the rest.

This order is one of comparatively recent date, having been founded by St. Alphonsus Liguori about a century since. From his earliest infancy this holy man exhibited an inclination for piety, and a taste for study. Scarcely had he completed his school life than he destined himself for the bar; but, before long, finding he had mistaken his vocation, he exchanged his profession of lawyer for the ecclesiastical condition, and remained firm to his new calling, despite the solicitations of his family, the brilliancy of his prospects, and the numberless vexations which harassed and perplexed him. He pursued a preparatory

course of theological study, prayer, penance, and works of mercy.

As soon as he had received sacerdotal consecration he entered into the Congregation of the Propaganda, established at Naples, and preached the divine word with fruit wherever he was sent.

The ignorance he met with among the country people, induced him to devote himself especially to their instruction. With this view, he realised the project of a congregation of missionaries, to whom he gave the title of *Brothers of the Most Holy Saviour*.

To the *simple* vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he added,—

1. That of accepting no dignity, employment, or benefice, out of the congregation, except in the case of an express order from a sovereign Pontiff or Superior general; and,

2. That of persevering in the order "*usque ad mortem;*" undertaking to accept no dispensation from this vow, short of that of the Pope or the Superior general.

In 1759, Benedict XIV. issued his approval of the new order, to which he granted many favours and privileges; and decided that, to distinguish it from *the Canons of the Most Holy Saviour*, it should henceforth bear the name of the *Most Holy Redeemer*.

Although Liguori had, notwithstanding his reluctance, been nominated by the Holy Father Clement XIII. to the see of St. Agathe des Goths, he did not cease to superintend his congregation, and preserved his functions of "*recteur majeur;*" his place being supplied, only as far as the details of management were concerned, by a vicar general; and when, weakened and worn out by long services, he had obtained from Pius VI. permission to resign his see in 1775, it was to retire into one of his houses at Nocera, where he lived in the exercise of prayer and good works.

His old age, however, was saddened by the sight of those divisions which rent asunder the Redemptorists, and finally separated them into three independent parties. It was not until four years after his death that a reconciliation took place between them. The Redemptorists spread considerably in Austria, and also established themselves in France, where, in the diocese of Strasburg, and under the episcopate of the Prince of Croy, they obtained an ancient monastery called Bischenberg, which they restored and occupied. Here they remained, much to the benefit of the surrounding country, until the Revolution of 1830, when they received an order, under political pretexts, to quit the country within eight days. Against this unjust command they appealed, but without effect, obtaining no satisfaction beyond that of a respite. At the end of the second period prescribed they were individually cited to appear before the judge, where they maintained their rights with becoming firmness. The court, being compelled to admit the illegality of the proceeding, had recourse to another and equally vexatious expedient. They obtained a prohibitory admonition from the Ordinary of Bischenberg, and ordered the municipal authorities to keep an eye upon their movements; thus establishing an equally virulent persecution, but in a form which ensured them against the charge of illegality.

They are now once more appreciated as well in France as in Belgium, and in England no less than in Ireland. There is, in Bruges, a house of seven *Pères Rédemptoristes* de Saint Trond, carrying on their quiet unobtrusive missions, but drawing crowds of hearers wherever they bear their tidings. One of their *œuvres* seems to be, to induce as many as they can of the lower orders to become members of that unique and valuable society called by the name of *La Sainte Famille.*

The Abbey of St. Trond itself was established in the vicinity of Bruges as long ago as the 7th century.

The history of the venerable founder of this order is one on which we may dwell with profit as well as admiration. Removed from us by an interval of scarcely fifty years, — identified, as it were, with the existing generation, and living in times whose annals are fertile in profligacy and infidelity of the most revolting nature, — we see in him the example of a long and holy life, almost dazzling us with its brilliancy, as we contrast it with the surrounding obscurity, — a silent but living reproach to the vices of his contemporaries.

When we read the lives of saints who have long since passed away from the earth, and gaze upon their acts through the dim perspective of subsequent centuries, we seem to see them surrounded with an illusory halo, through the mists of which they appear to us something more than men; and instead of saying, with St. Augustine, "What *they* have done, *we* may do," we give up the attempt in despair, — forgetting that the spring whence issued their gifts of grace is exhaustless, — and say, hopelessly, "Ah, these were saints; how can I expect to attain to their perfection?"

In St. Alphonsus we have a standing evidence of the enduring holiness of the Church; and, in admiring in his person the operations of grace, we can scarcely feel that there is presumption in aspiring to a similar degree of eminence. His life is a great fact which gives denial to all pretexts of times, customs, and the frailty of human nature.

Friday, Sept. 7th. — Once each week, on this day, the precious relic, of which the exquisite little *Chapelle St. Basile, ou du Saint Sang de Dieu* may be said to be the shrine, is exhibited, from early morning till eleven o'clock, to the reverential gaze of the faithful.

I therefore, attended the seven o'clock Mass, and found a full congregation assembled within the walls. The object of their *veneration* — for it is distinctly understood

by all Catholics *not* to be an object of *worship*—has the appearance of a darkly stained sponge, and is contained in a phial about six or eight inches in length. A ribbon being fastened round either end of this, it is suspended round the neck of the priest, who displays it as he holds it horizontally before him. He sits guarded by soldiers on the north side of the altar during mass, and is relieved by another priest at the termination of each service, when all who have assisted are invited to ascend the steps on one side, kiss it bowing on one knee, and pass down on the other side. The history of this relic is, that it was saved by St. Joseph of Arimathea at the time that our Lord's body was taken down from the cross, and that in the year 1156 it came into the possession of Theodoric, Count of Flanders, in the following manner:—

His wife Sybilla having, during his absence in the Holy Land, retired into the hospital of St. Jean l'Aumônier, and there given herself up to the service of the lepers, requested her husband, on his quitting Palestine, to leave her there, that she might labour for the sanctification of her soul, by continuing the practice of this penitential exercise, and consecrating the remainder of her days to the care of the afflicted. Baldwin III., king of Jerusalem, and brother to the Countess, joined his entreaties to hers, and, after they had prevailed on the Count to acquiesce, Baldwin presented him with this precious relic in token of his friendship, and in gratitude for the sacrifice.

The crypt under this church is said to be the earliest building in Belgium: it is Romanesque, and consists of an aisle on either side the nave, and a chancel terminating in a round apse. The roof is groined, and the aisles appear narrow, perhaps from the size of the columns, which are short and heavy. Here, as elsewhere in Belgium, white-wash has been lavishly expended.

I went this morning to visit one of the *Ecoles dentel-*

lières, which are, I think, peculiar to this country. It was founded, about thirty years since, by the Abbé de Foare, and placed under the charge of *Sœurs de l'Assomption,* of whom there are now nine in this house and sixteen in another, also in Bruges. The *œuvres* they undertake are the care and instruction of young children, the direction of *atéliers* such as this, and of orphan asylums.

They are of purely Belgian origin, and have no connection whatever with the order of the same name in Paris; nor, indeed, have they any house but this. The habit is quite dissimilar in form, no less than in colour; this being black, and, moreover, extremely unbecoming, while that is purple and peculiarly graceful. The only point of similarity lies in the date of their foundation. They are partly cloistered, and observe a rule. Each Sister contributes a small *dot,* upon the aggregate of which the community subsist.

The house is large and roomy, and stands "*entre cour et jardin.*" I did not see what they wanted with so much space, since, as far as the girls are concerned, it is only an "externat:" these are 150 in number, and the plan is as follows. They come every morning at six, and attend Mass in the chapel; they then proceed to the *atélier,* where each has her place: some are engaged in spinning the thread with which they work, and the rest in manufacturing various descriptions of lace. Some is called "*point de Bruxelles,*" some "*point de Malines,*" some "*Lille,*" and the greater proportion "*Valenciennes,*" but curiously enough none bears the name of the place where it is made. They are furnished with pillows, bobbins, and materials, by the institution; but the proceeds of their work are all their own. The quantity they produce in a day depends of course on a variety of circumstances, such as the depth, fineness, or richness of the lace, or the ability, age, and experience of the worker. One of the best *ouvrières* displayed a piece of

certainly very rich lace, but less than a quarter of a yard in length, on which she said she had been engaged nearly five weeks. The price they receive is about a third of that for which it sells. They are always sure of sale, and generally the demand exceeds the supply. All that I saw making today, I was told was ordered beforehand by large houses: the greater proportion of it is sent to England. Although the profits are their own, the choice as to sloth or diligence is not left to themselves; and accordingly a task is set them each morning, their fulfilment or neglect of which is subject to reward or punishment. They go home to dinner at twelve, returning at half-past one.

The instruction is far from being confined to this department: they are taught to cut out and manufacture clothes, to read, write, and cipher; but the object for which all this is afforded them, is the hour's religious instruction, followed by *catéchisme*, which they receive every evening. There is of course a resident Chaplain, by whom they are likewise carefully prepared for first communion, and directed afterwards; for they are of all ages. On Sundays they likewise attend for religious instruction and divine worship.

Two or more Sisters are always present, and doubtless they take judicious advantage of all opportunities to raise the tone of their minds and furnish them with food for reflection.

As I stood at the door they were all singing a Latin hymn as they sat busily at work, which I thought must have a very excellent effect in more ways than one.

The chapel is very pretty and roomy. The Sisters have their *tribune* apart, and chant the offices; the girls occupying the nave or body of the chapel.

CHAP. VI.

To the Hospital of St. Jean — chiefly celebrated for the rare collection of early Flemish pictures of which it boasts; those of Hemling, which are matchless *chef-d'œuvres*, having been presented as thank-offerings for his recovery from a long and severe illness under the hospitable care and attention of the Sisters in this very convent.

The hospital would seem to be as nearly as possible in the same state as when it afforded its shelter and protection to the grateful painter.

The spacious vaulted and groined hall, of late Romanesque architecture, with its lofty arches, ponderous columns, and old sculptured capitals and mouldings, has quite a character of its own, and is imposing and picturesque in the extreme; but, as regards ventilation, it is, I think, about the worst specimen it ever was my lot to visit. The beds, each provided with a crucifix, are 240 in number, being 100 each for men and women, and forty for children. Even these, contrary to modern usage, have curtains, and, as they are of blue check, it has not that appearance of perfect cleanliness one expects, as a matter of course, in hospitals now-a-days. The floor is of large stone-flags, rendering bedside-carpets and oil-cloths — which have long been abandoned in hospitals as objectionable for many reasons — a matter of necessity here.

There are sacred prints, coloured, framed and glazed, upon the walls.

The surgical and medical cases are mixed together: in-

deed, there is, in fact, only one ward for the patients of either sex.

One poor fellow I passed, a lad of about eighteen, looked very ghastly ; and I was told by the Sister who conducted me that he had had his leg amputated not many hours since; chloroform was used, but she affirmed, " qu'il avait beaucoup souffert tout de même."

Each has a neat little table and chair by his bedside, and friends may visit them at any hour every day, unless the doctors object. Several who were convalescent were sitting up and taking advantage of each other's society ; some playing at cards, others at dominoes or draughts, according to their fancy.

Twenty-four Sisters have the charge of the patients, two of them superintending the kitchen. There is a resident Chaplain, who devotes himself entirely to his duties among them. There are always two masses a day, and often more.

The chapel runs along one side of the ward, and as the arches above the wall are open into it, the patients can hear Mass from their beds. This chapel is open to the public. There is, besides, a little chapel within the ward.

This afternoon I took advantage of the offer of a friend to visit with him a private charity of a most unostentatious and praiseworthy character, and one which seems to be attended with great and merited success.

It is an orphanage designed for English boys,—Catholics of course, Mr. Robinson, the founder, being himself of a Catholic family distinguished for many works of charity. Though but recently opened, it already receives sixteen destitute and friendless boys, who are by this benevolent help rescued from beggary, vagrancy, and, in all probability, crime and ruin, to become, it is to be hoped, well-instructed and useful men.

The Rev. T. Crowther, actuated by a similar spirit of

charity, acts as Chaplain to the little community, and superintends the instruction of the classes.

The chapel, though small, is sufficient for their numbers; it is very prettily decorated, and, like the rest of the arrangements, does infinite credit to the intention, the exertions, the liberality, and the taste of the founder.

The dormitory, class-room, refectory, and play-ground have been carefully and judiciously contrived in a house which, of course, it has been necessary to "adapt" to its present use.

Mr. Crowther appears to take a very kind interest in the boys. He has a microscope for their instruction and amusement, the slides of which he arranges himself with much skill and scientific knowledge.

While we were there, Dr. Robertson, professor of philosophy at the Catholic University of Dublin, came in, and I was not sorry to make his acquaintance. He is the learned translator of "Möhler's Symbolik," and has rendered some of Schlegel's abstruse philosophical works into English; but, added to his eminence as a linguist and a man of learning, I was told he was distinguished for deep religious feeling. He passes his vacation here with some members of his family, and returns to Dublin in the autumn. From him I obtained some useful information respecting the Béguines and other religious orders in Belgium, with which he seems well acquainted. He, like others, spoke very warmly of the Bishop of Bruges, and praised his literary attainments no less than his private character.

Leaving the Orphange, we proceeded to M. l'Abbé Carton's institution for deaf, dumb, and blind children.

Nothing is done here without the participation of the Church, and this is under the religious supervision of one of the recently founded orders peculiar to Belgium, that is — as I was told by a Belgian with honest pride—"*d'origine*

purement Belge." They are called *Sœurs de la Sainte Enfance de Marie*, and were founded by M. l'Abbé Carton at the suggestion of M. de Boussy, late Bishop of Bruges, who is said to have remarked, "toutes les misères humaines ont en Belgique un ordre de réligieux devoués à leur soulagement, les sourds-muets et les aveugles seuls ne jouissent pas de ce bonheur."

There are six in charge of this house. It receives 150 inmates, of whom many have been taught to articulate. This accomplishment is said to be of great advantage to them, but it is by no means pleasant to hear. It is almost like galvanic motion in a corpse: the utterance is quite unearthly, being totally unlike the natural sound of the human voice; it is, besides, accompanied by evident signs of effort, and a vacant look betokening a total unconsciousness of the modulation the speaker is himself producing.

Two or three of them were called out of the ranks, as they sat variously engaged in handicraft, by the chaplain, who, in the absence of Abbé Carton, went over the institution with us,—and, apparently with great reluctance, complied with his desire that they should answer his questions in our hearing.

The method by which they are instructed in speaking, is the ingenious invention of the Abbé Sicard; but curiously enough, though it is adopted in many deaf and dumb schools, it has been abandoned at the original institution in Paris. It is effected by means of vibration. The teacher, pointing to a written alphabet, makes the given sound, beginning simply with the vowels. As he says "a" he holds the child's finger to his own throat, and then applying it to that of his pupil makes him imitate the vibration, and with it the sound; and so on with the rest. The result, in the generality of cases, is a very imperfect repetition. Some, however, succeed much better than others. One girl, to whom I spoke, appeared remarkably intelligent,

and though her mode of articulation was very syllabic, and gave one the idea of a person speaking a foreign language, she answered so readily, that I should have thought she must be able to hear, had not my conductor assured me that her facility of apprehension proceeded solely from the rapidity with which she caught the movement of the lips, to which, by experience, she had learned to attach the words which gave them particular motions. To this girl, the power of speaking will certainly be of great use in after life, unless by any accident she should lose her eyesight.

There is one very curious and at the same time very sad case here, that of a young girl who is blind, deaf, and dumb; so that she has only one sense left, that of the touch, by which it is possible to communicate with her; and yet by means of this alone, they have contrived to teach her to read, to write, to cipher, and to make lace. What is more surprising still, however, is that she has been able to acquire religious knowledge, and not long since made her first communion. When she was first told she must go to confession, she showed great unwillingness to comply; but ultimately, feeling she was wrong, she asked if the Abbé went, and on being informed that he did, said she would go too, and has been very regular in this duty ever since.

She is much attached to the Sisters, and recognises them all as soon as she touches them; but she is devoted to the Abbé, and seems instinctively aware of his presence the moment he enters the room.

A book printed in raised letters was put before her; she passed her fingers rapidly over the page; and a frame with slides being brought in its place, with a box of type distributed into partitions, she immediately spelled out the passage she had read. When she reached the end of the second line, she, by some accident, mistook the space between the two first lines, for that destined to hold the third,

but before she reached the end of the first word she discovered her error and corrected it.

I should imagine the education of this afflicted girl must be one of the greatest triumphs ever achieved by the benefactors of suffering humanity.

All the girls are instructed in reading, writing, ciphering, needlework, and lace-making; and the boys, who occupy the other wing of the building, have *atéliers* superintended by master workmen, in which each is taught the trade for which he seems to show most aptitude.

The blind, in addition to a trade which will enable them to earn their own livelihood, learn music and singing, in which they take great delight. They also read from raised books, and write in frames as in England, embossing the letters by means of a point, after which it is turned, to be read.

Religious knowledge is an important item in their education. Besides daily teaching from the "catéchisme," they have an "*instruction*" on Sundays and Thursdays, which is communicated to them by signs, by the Abbé himself or his chaplain.

The chapel, in which mass is said daily, has been contrived in a spacious room very ingeniously arranged to serve the purpose. The walls are diapered in rich colours with much taste. On an altar, south of the high altar, stands an exquisitely carved oak tabernacle, designed and executed by a very promising young artist, native of Louvain, who died a few weeks since.

The funds which support this institution, the only one this town possesses, are contributed by the seven parishes into which Bruges is divided.

Let us now contrast this with the institution founded with a similar object in the Old Kent Road, London, which I recently visited, for the express purpose of bringing the two accounts into juxtaposition.

I shall make no comment of my own, because the facts are in themselves all-sufficient to enable my readers to form their own conclusions.

The information I acquired during my visit went to show —

That *no religious instruction of any kind* has been contemplated in the foundation of this establishment.

That no parent is ever asked whether the children to be admitted have been baptized or not. On the contrary, the managers pique themselves on their "liberality" in this respect; affirming that "*they* are not *punctilious* on such matters."

That Protestants of all denominations, Catholics if their parents choose to send them, and Jews, are indiscriminately educated.

That the only difference made, is the instruction given to the Israelite children in the Jew catechism.

That all meet for morning domestic prayer daily in the eating-room — for this there is no help, as they have neither chapel nor chaplain, — where the prayer is recited, or rather "articulated," by one boy, and imitated syllabically by the rest, who watch his mouth all the time intently, in order to repeat the sound.

That private prayer or devotion is altogether ignored by the authorities. The children would not be *prevented* from saying a bed-side prayer, but the idea is not even *suggested* to them.

That their preparation for confirmation consists in being "*drilled up*," a few days before the time comes, by the teacher, after which there is "*never any difficulty in passing them.*"

That the by no means improbable result of this system shows them to be "unaccountably savage and vicious, mischievous and deceitful, quarrelsome and unkind to one another, and oblivious and ungrateful towards their masters and superiors."

On the other hand, M. l'Abbé Carton's method is not only appreciated in his own country, but has been warmly received and adopted in France, where he was not long since loaded with honours, having carried the day against eighteen competitors who had also deeply considered the subject.

He has, I am told, been intending for some time to bring out a work on the subject of deaf and dumb education, having been interested nearly all his life in this afflicted portion of the community, and a close observer of what may be effected with respect to them. His method of first communicating to them the knowledge of a Supreme Being, and, in due course, the other doctrines of revealed truth, is quite original, and has had great success.

The deaf and dumb institution, however, is by no means the only field in which M. l'Abbé Carton has laboured. He has bought up the old Abbey of La Spermalie, despoiled and desecrated in times of anarchy, but now restored, through his pious care, to holy uses.

It was originally the refuge of the *Réligieuses des Dunes*, when they first came from Furnes to establish themselves at Bruges. Subsequently it passed into the hands of the *Bénédictines*, whose abbey, then situated at Seyseele, had been destroyed by the *Gueux* in 1600.

It has, under its present *régime*, a fourfold object.

The first is, the secular education of gentlemen's daughters upon religious principles, and under the supervision of Sisters *de la Sainte Enfance*, fifteen in number. There are servants for the coarse work. It is calculated for forty pupils, each of whom pays 400 fr. or 16*l.* per annum. They are instructed by professors, who give their lessons in the presence of the Sisters.

The second affords a similar education to day-scholars, who, though of the same class, are kept quite separate from the boarders, for various reasons.

The third is a *salle d'asile,* or, as they are called in Belgium, an *école gardienne* for the infant poor, from two to seven years of age, 300 in number. In winter they dine in the school, and at the expense of the institution.

The fourth is to provide a quiet, comfortable, and respectable home for lady boarders, for whom separate rooms are reserved, and who have the use of a garden of their own. There are, just now, about twenty in this department, and each pays *30l.* annually for board and lodging. Among them are several English and Irish ladies.

The chapel is very *soigné*, and will, when finished, be one of the most beautiful in Belgium.

The diapering of the walls and columns, of which only a portion is finished as yet, is exceedingly elaborate in execution, and rich in colour, and has already a very striking effect. The rest of the decoration is in keeping ; and I was scarcely surprised at the satisfaction with which they exhibited it.

The building is a large, antique, quadrangular structure, with a wide cloister all round it. In the middle is a neat garden, well stocked with flowers, and attached to it is a paddock, where they keep cows enough to supply themselves with butter and milk : there is also a poultry yard and kitchen garden.

As an instance of the effect of the system of confession, I may mention an authentic story I heard to-day.

A lady I know, here, and to whom the circumstance happened, told me that one day, sitting near the window, she observed her confessor, a Carmelite father, crossing the street, and approaching the door, which having reached, he handed a parcel to the servant and disappeared. On opening it, she found it to contain a sum of money enclosed in a paper, wherein, in a handwriting perfectly unknown to her, she was informed that the person who forwarded the amount had, a long time since, obtained it

from her fraudulently, and now desired to make restitution. Who the "penitent thief" was, she had not the remotest notion.

To the *Grand Séminaire*, a magnificent building, formerly a Bernardine convent, but sequestrated at the Revolution, standing within an extensive enclosure, well laid out in the style of a "*Jardin Anglais*," and surrounded by a high and massive wall. It is a college for the education of priests, and accommodates upwards of 100 young men, who are received at the age of eighteen, and go through a very complete course of study. They are likewise practised in hardships and privations, and are subjected to a discipline which is said to fit them for the roughest life.

They are specially trained for the pulpit and the confessional. The lecture and class-rooms are numerous, well arranged, and spacious: among them is a model chapel fitted with benches.

At one extremity is a pulpit whence they exercise themselves in oratory. Another was shown us, in each of the four corners of which was a confessional.

The chapel, which is much newer than the rest of the building, having been built about 100 years ago, when the original one was destroyed by fire, is a grand and imposing structure: it is of very great length, and paved with grey and white marble. No expense seems to have been spared here.

A broad cloister, similarly paved, supported by handsome columns, and enclosed with glass, runs round the quadrangle, which as usual is enlivened with flower-borders. The walls of the cloister are divided, by large semicircular pilasters, into compartments, which are filled up with old paintings, representing legends from the lives of the saints.

The dormitories occupy a corresponding gallery above, and in this, each student has his own separate cell.

The refectory is a remarkably handsome hall, decorated with the portraits of a long line of Bishops of Bruges. The spaces between are filled up by shields, on which the arms of each are painted.

At the extremity is a raised *tribune*, whence the students are occasionally addressed; and at the side, a rostrum, from which one reads to the rest during meal-time. It is about thirty years since this was converted into a college. Being vacation-time, professors as well as students were absent.

CHAP. VII.

Saturday, Sept. 8th, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.—This morning, on going out, I found the usually quiet streets all in a ferment of stir and bustle. The Grande Place was entirely filled with booths and stalls, which seemed to have started up as by enchantment since I passed through it last night; glittering wares were being displayed by gaily-clad vendors, and admired by lounging purchasers, whose holiday habiliments acquired a yet brighter hue from the clear atmosphere and morning sun.

I was to visit this morning an institution of a very interesting character, "*L'Hospice des Incurables*;" so, making my way through the busy crowd, I hastened in the direction indicated, to be present at early Mass in the chapel which belongs to it.

The congregation consisted entirely of poor persons, a separate portion of the sacred edifice being partitioned off from that appropriated to the patients, for the accommodation of any who choose to attend. The Sisters occupy their own *tribune* or gallery, where they form a choir; and, although curtained off, their voices are those which chant the services, while one of their number plays the organ.

The altar was very prettily decorated in honour of the day, and the *Sœur sacristaine* was engaged in putting a few finishing touches to the ornaments, and lighting the candles. She then opened a little door, within which was a rope, which she pulled and began ringing the bell. At this signal all the patients who were not actually bed-ridden,

came pouring in ; some shuffling, some hobbling, and some groping, their way.

Others, again, limped on crutches, while a considerable number were carried in their chairs by means of bearers passed through the bars like those of a sedan chair, and withdrawn when the chair was set down.

These were accompanied by two or three of the Sisters, who likewise, themselves, carried in some crippled children, and placed them in little chairs in front of the altar.

Those patients who were unable to leave the infirmary, I afterwards found, could hear Mass from their beds through an opening into the chapel.

The Chaplain to the hospital then came in, attended by a choir boy, and said Mass, the Sisters singing the chanted portions in the choir.

After Mass, I asked permission, which was readily granted, to see the house. Like all other institutions of the kind abroad, it possesses all the advantages of air and space ; and is built in the usual quadrangular style, being an old convent of very early date.

It accommodates 160 patients, women and children. The Sisters are seventeen in number, and are of the order of "*Jesus et Marie.*" They were founded by M. le Chanoine Triest, and are called "*Sœurs de la Charité,*" but have no connection whatever with the "*Filles de St. Vincent de Paul,*" although they take that saint for their patron, and are known throughout Belgium under the title of "*Sœurs de St. Vincent,*" no less than by their true name, "*Sœurs de la Charité de Jésus et de Marie.*" They wear the habit of St. Bernard, and follow his rule, but to it they add the *œuvres* of St. V. de P. The dress is of white cloth, and, being made long behind, is looped up when they are engaged in their active duties : they have a white linen cap and scapular. In the hospital, they wear a blue checked apron, and sleeves of the same material from the

wrist to the elbow. Silence is one of their rules, and the word is painted in visible characters over the entrances to the cloisters and corridors, the refectory and work-room. The sisters are cloistered as regards going out, but there is no *grille*, and no restriction as to their communicating with persons exterior to the convent.

The wards are far better ventilated here than is usually the case in Belgium, but the beds stand end to end, and with one side to the wall, which certainly looks neither so neat nor so commodious as the usual plan.

The infirmary was nearly full: one woman, who was pointed out to me, I was told, has only left her bed once during the thirty-five years the house has been established; and, on that occasion, she was carried to the chapel in a chair, to assist at Mass, but fainted by the way, and it was found necessary to bring her back.

Her case seems to be one of a most peculiar character, and has puzzled a multitude of medical men who have been to visit her. She can eat neither bread nor vegetables; and of the former, the smell alone has been known to throw her into convulsions, after which she remains in a state of *sourdmutisme* during four or five weeks. For breakfast she takes an egg beaten up in a small quantity of milk; but at other meals she will eat the fattest meat that can be procured. As my informant observed, "C'est une drôle de maladie que celle là."

The patients are of all ages, and seem to be afflicted with every possible variety of disease.

There are three or four servants in the house, but they only act under the direction and *surveillance* of the Sisters, who perform every office for the patients with their own hands. These duties, which are part of their vow, are the first to which they attend after Mass and meditation in the chapel every morning, and before they breakfast. Their hour for rising is four. The kitchen, also, comes within

their province, and two of them take their turn in sitting up each night in the sick ward.

One wing of the building is reserved for "*pensionnaires libres*," of whom there are about forty now.

This is altogether a most satisfactory institution, and one of those practical results which seem capable of emanating from the Catholic system only.

The services it requires are such as would only be suggested, much less performed, through a spirit of self-devotion and true charity, which, as far as experience goes, none but the Catholic religion has ever sufficed to produce.

I speak neither unadvisedly nor yet bitterly, but merely as an observer of known facts; and if any one disputes my assertion, I shall be most willing to accept his challenge: The only condition I impose is, that he shall show me a *Protestant "incurable" hospital served, as is this, by Protestant Sisters, not hirelings, whose lives are voluntarily and irrevocably given to this most unattractive labour of love.*

I do not mean that blame attaches to the component individuals of Protestant communities, who have never looked beyond the narrow creed within which their more generous sympathies are restrained; for I doubt whether the Protestant system ever gave any of its adherents the remotest notion of the responsibilities attached to a right appreciation of the "spiritual and corporal works of mercy." I confess I never so much as heard of the obligations they imply, until I saw them set out in a Catholic book.

True, they are all to be found in Holy Scripture; but is not this simple instance a proof of the vagueness with which Bible precepts are accepted under the Protestant system of self-direction; while Catholics, who are accused of "neglecting the Bible," cull from it fruits of holiness which a Protestant, albeit hungering and thirsting after righteousness, altogether fails to perceive? I fancy we must all

bring ourselves to say with the eunuch of Queen Candace, "How can I understand unless some man show me?"

After breakfast I went to High Mass at the Cathedral, where there was a tolerably numerous congregation, most of whom belonged to the lower orders. The women had their market-baskets with them, which they set down at their sides while service lasted. Orange-trees in boxes had been brought in to adorn the chancel; and large pointed crimson silk banners leaned against the columns. The altar was decked with flowers, and in the centre of the nave, before the chancel gates, a temporary altar had been erected, on which stood a figure of the Blessed Virgin: this was also surrounded with flowers.

The church of Nôtre Dame, which I afterwards visited, was yet more richly decorated for the occasion.

I visited, this afternoon, a house of one of the more recently established and purely Belgian orders, instituted about thirty years ago, by M. le Chanoine Triest, now dead, — that of the *Sœurs Maricoles*. Their *œuvre* is the instruction of young girls of the poorèr class, of whom they receive a considerable number, and, besides the usual subjects of instruction, teach them needlework and lace-making: they likewise undertake the management of the poor schools attached to St. Saviour's Church — a certain number attending every day to fulfil the duties there. There are twenty-eight of them, and this is the parent-house.

The dress is of brown cloth, with a black veil, under which the cap is white.

Having expressed to a friend here, a great wish to understand the workhouse system as carried out in Belgium, he walked with me to the *presbytère* of the parish of St. Jacques, and, having inquired for its master, we were shown into a small unpretending *parloir* hung with sacred prints, and opening into a neat little garden, of which he

told me the good old man was very proud. Here he soon joined us — the exact type of what a Curé ought to be; and, having seated ourselves at his request, I proceeded to explain to him the errand which brought us, and to request his influence with the parochial authorities to obtain permission to visit the poor-house.

A house exactly answering to our "workhouse" they do not possess, though when he exclaimed in Flemish "*Ah, ah, Verkhuys*," I thought I must have hit upon something of a similar description. This, however, I rejoice to say, was not the case, and the "Verkhuys" proved to be a far from objectionable adjunct to the "*Dépôt de Mendicité*," which latter, it seems, is the corresponding, but by no means similar, institution. In France they go by the name of "*Hôpital général*," and are slightly different in character and intention, being more appropriately translated by the word "poorhouse."

Though there are seven parishes in Bruges, there is only one workhouse, which, being under the spiritual care of M. l'Abbé van Droom, the Curé gave me at once a letter to this ecclesiastic, which I immediately proceeded to deliver.

It is in the "Quartier de la Vieille Madeleine;" and I found the Abbé's residence without much difficulty. The door was opened by his "*gouvernante*," who showed me through a handsome entrance-hall, into a large sitting-room, the walls of which were literally covered with old oil paintings in heavy old-fashioned frames. The subjects were various — so likewise were the degrees of excellence, while the authenticity of the greater portion was more than doubtful. The room was furnished with several massive pieces of carved oak *boiserie*, and which, with the presence of other curious objects, seemed to bespeak the fancies of an antiquary. I had not been long waiting, when the Abbé entered with my note of introduction in his hand. His

countenance was full of friendliness and good humour ; but though he welcomed me with the greatest cordiality, it was plain my curiosity as to workhouses was not to be gratified here.

He told me, at once, that, with the best will in the world, he had no authority to admit a visitor within the precincts of the Dépôt de Mendicité ; that that power rested entirely with the committee, from whom nothing was easier than to obtain an order, provided I could wait for another board-day.

As this was out of the question, I was obliged to content myself with such particulars as I could extract from the Abbé, and from which I learned that there are only four of these "Dépôts de Mendicite" in all Belgium, viz., besides this one, those at Mons, at Reckheim near Liége, and at "La Cambre" near Ixelles ; that this one accommodates seven hundred inmates of all ages and both sexes ; and that the class of persons received there, are mendicants and vagrants of all descriptions. The house is generally full in the winter-time, when work is scarce and provisions are dear ; but, though it supplies relief and shelter, it holds out no encouragement to idleness, as there is plenty of work provided for all who come. They are paid a trifling sum for what they do ; and as this remuneration is proportioned to the work, and not to the time it occupies, they have every inducement to diligence and activity.

There is a chapel attached, in which the Chaplain says Mass every morning, all the inmates attending. There are also sermons and instructions on certain days, and a catéchisme for the children, who are carefully prepared for *prémière communion.*

The infirmary is regularly and frequently visited by the chaplain. The women's wards, and especially the infirmary, are under the supervision of three *Sœurs de la Providence*

de Champion, and those of the men under that of six *Frère des bonnes œuvres*, de Renaix.

This order was founded about twenty years ago by L'Abbé Glorieux, who is still living, and had the education of poor children for its object. To unite in one establishment *frères et sœurs*, and to bring together all appliances and means necessary to promote every department of instruction, the Abbé built a large conventual house at Renaix; but after setting it on foot, the administration fell into other hands. These brothers, however, instruct children and adults of the poorer class, and receive, as a condition of their establishing themselves in any town or rural district, a house and so many hundred francs per frère from the commune. This sum varies from 600 to 800 francs a year.

After supplying me with this information, which he wound up with a strong recommendation to visit the *Dépôt de Mendicité* of *La Cambre* near Ixelles, M. van Droom proceeded to do the honours of his collection, to each component object of which there was a little history attached; some were heir-looms, others bequests, and others had been added by himself at various times. Those I had at first observed were far from being the whole, or even the half of his curiosities, which were distributed through several rooms, and exhibited with an air of *anch'io pittore*, which gave me the idea that, if the worthy Abbé was not a practical amateur, it was rather from deficiency of time, than from any want of taste for the occupation.

On leaving, I turned towards the Rue St. Catherine, to call for a friend who was to take me to a house very well worth seeing, that of the *Frères de la Charité*, which comprises an *Hospice des Vieillards*, and a gratuitous *Ecole primaire et gardienne* for boys. This order is one of Chanoine Triest's foundations, and is very numerous in

Belgium, to which country its members are as yet confined.

Being holiday time, the boys were all away. The old men of course remain all the year through. It was just dinner-time, and those who were able to leave the infirmary were assembling in the refectory to enjoy their meal, which sent forth a very savoury odour: two of the *Frères* were busy in the kitchen "dishing up;" and although, on this account, some little bustle was apparent, the general order, neatness and cleanliness of the culinary department was very remarkable.

One large room, or ward, is appropriated to *incurables*, of whom alone there are upwards of 100. There is plenty of garden-ground, and a large portion belongs to this class of inmates; the windows, or rather doors of their ward, open into it, and as benches are fixed outside in the shade, several were enjoying the fine weather, seated in gossiping parties, or playing at dominoes under the trees.

Those who remained within were evidently the objects of the care and solicitude of these devoted "Brothers." Some reclined, propped up with pillows, in their easy chairs; others, who had reached the "last scene of all this strange eventful history," and were vegetating in "second childishness," were seated in *fauteuils*, and barred in with a semi-circular ledge, which served them as a table; several were lying outside their beds; but all wore an air of cheerfulness and security, and smiled in grateful recognition as the "Brother" who conducted me passed them.

Beyond this we arrived at the spacious and well-appointed class-rooms, reserved for the 350 boys who are educated here.

As at the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes*, particular attention is paid to caligraphy, map-making, and drawing; in

the latter, however, I was surprised to find that neatness of execution and beauty of finish are suffered to supersede that useful fundamental knowledge which can alone be acquired by a study of the true principles of art. Thus perspective, geometry, and practice in drawing straight and curved lines, are altogether neglected, and accuracy of delineation and freedom of touch are sacrificed to the acquisition of mere mechanical handling and elaborate minuteness. The aim is not high, but at the same time it must be admitted that the perfection to which it has attained is so great, that its results must be seen to be believed.

The specimens shewn me were copies of mezzotinto and fine steel line-engravings, and so exquisitely were the originals imitated, not to say reproduced, that it required the closest inspection to distinguish the one from the other.

Several alphabets of fancy letters, including every possible variety of design, but all copied from engravings, were also produced, and it really was almost incredible that such surpassingly delicate workmanship could be the production of lower-class boys, of from ten to fourteen years of age. A very complete ancient and modern atlas was next brought out, and was equally astonishing; but the *magnum opus* of all, was a globe of about two feet in diameter, in course of completion, the work of a lad of fourteen, named Copman. Anything so perfectly faultless I never beheld : and yet, neat, precise, and elaborate, as it was, he has been less than a year engaged upon it. The names of places, whether in large or small characters, were written with so much accuracy and minuteness, that it was long before I could make sure I had not misunderstood the "Brother," who told me it was all "*handverk*."

The one who superintends this drawing and writing class seemed not a little proud of the specimens he shewed; and well might he be, as a more triumphant success never yet crowned any experiment; and seeing that he makes

nothing by it, beyond securing this satisfaction, I think he ought to be allowed the fullest enjoyment of it.

Besides all this, however, which is rather a *délassement* than a study, the boys are taught the French and Flemish languages, vocal and instrumental music, arithmetic and book-keeping.

This order is another of those instituted by Chanoine Triest, and corresponds to the *Sœurs de la Charité*, being also called *Frères de St. Vincent de Paul.* Like the Sisters, they adopt the rule and habit of St. Bernard, and the *œuvres* of St. Vincent. In the chapel, which is very plain, and where the vesper-service was being said, I observed, in niches on either side the altar, figures of these two Saints.

There are fourteen Brothers in this house. The dress they wear consists of a long black cassock, buttoned down the front, and a black skull-cap.

The convent of *Hemelsdael* is an interesting old building. Before the French Revolution it had been from time immemorial a convent of strict Benedictine nuns. It is now a boarding-school for gentlemen's daughters, under thirty-one Sisters of an order resembling that of the *Sacré Cœur.* It has an off-shoot in Bruges for the reception of day-scholars.

Besides the number of religious houses I visited in Bruges, I was told there were many others equally efficacious and praiseworthy, which I had not time to see.

One is that of the *Jesuit Fathers,* six in number, who carry on missionary work much in the same way as the Redemptorists.

That of the *Frères Xavériens,* twenty-one in number, who keep an infant-school for boys, and who, in both their houses here, hold an evening class for adult labourers, artisans, mechanics and journeymen of all trades.

The *Hospice St. Hubert,* under *Sœurs Hospitalières* of the same order as those at the *Hospice St. Julien.* This

was founded in 1615 by Gerard and Herman Van Volden, originally for ten indigent and infirm old men, and one to act as porter.

Both these houses are now under the direction of Chanoine Maes.

The Hospital of *La Potterie*, so called from the original destination of the building, for indigent women, served by seventeen *Sœurs Hospitalières du Saint Esprit.*

The Hospital of *La Madeleine*, for old and infirm persons, served by sixteen *Sœurs Hospitalières*, of the order of St. Augustin.

A convent of twenty-three *Sœurs Noires*, an ancient Flemish order, answering to the *Sœurs de Bon Secours*, whose *œuvre* is to visit and nurse the sick, rich and poor, at their own homes. When they go to the rich, a small daily sum is paid for their services, to their house, and goes to support it ; but to the poor they go from pure motives of charity, and of course accept nothing.

A convent of seventeen *Sœurs de St. Joseph*, for the education of children of the upper class, and to which is added gratuitous *apprentissage* for young girls in poor circumstances.

A society of sixteen *Dames de l'Instruction Chrétienne*, holding, first, a *pensionnat*, and secondly, a gratuitous elementary school, comprising instruction in manual work for young girls.

A convent of twenty *Sœurs Apostolines*, for the same objects as the last—this being the *Maison Mère.* Chanoine Maes is the founder of this order, and this house closely adjoining, or rather forming part of the Jerusalem Church, was ceded to them by the Comte de Thienne, whose property it is.

CHAP. VIII.

I LEFT Bruges to-day, much to my regret, and having heard much of the seminary at Roulers, I thought it well to stop there to visit it.

The building stands at the extremity of the small town itself, and is of dimensions capable of accommodating 400 students. The course of study is the same as that pursued at the generality of "*petits séminaires*," but differs from that of other colleges in this diocese, inasmuch as the first class here, now, is for philosophy, this subject having, before the time of the present superior, M. le Chanoine Faict, been given at the "*Grand Séminaire*," at Bruges.

There is likewise at Roulers a house of fifteen *Sœurs de la Charité et de la Miséricorde*, taking for their *œuvre* the care of orphan girls, and holding a gratuitous lace-school.

The *Maison Mère* of the *Sœurs de la Charité Hospitalières* is situated here. It combines an *hospice* for sick and infirm persons of both sexes, with a permanent staff of fourteen Sisters. Some of these make it their occupation to visit the sick at their own homes.

A little *détour* enabled me to see the curious and picturesque old Château of Rumbeke. Except that the moat and drawbridge, which once protected it, have disappeared, it is still maintained in precisely the same state as in days of yore. It is the property of the ancient and noble family of Thienne, from whom sprang St. Cajetan; and its late possessor, with laudable liberality and hospitality, offered its shelter and protection to the Jesuits during the

persecutions they suffered at the commencement of the century.

The late count's widow and daughters inhabit the château during a portion of the year, and the little chapel still serves them as a family oratory. It has a tranquil, devotional aspect, and the decorations are in character with its use; the stained glass windows, though small, are perfect, and appear to have escaped the rough handling which has disfigured so many other interesting remains.

The château itself is on a somewhat small scale, but its construction proclaims it to be about the date of Chambord, similar pepper-box turrets figuring on the roof. Pursuing my way to Ghent, I arrived there late in the evening, and located myself in the *Marché aux Oiseaux*.

Sunday, Sept. 9th.— On waking this morning, I became aware of an unusual stir outside; and, on drawing the curtains, saw a multitudinous assemblage occupying the street, beginning at the Place d'Armes. Each side was occupied by a row of stalls or booths, some covered with striped awnings, surrounded by both venders and purchasers in holiday attire. Most of the busy, chattering crowd carried a book in their hands, and were evidently on their way to or from Mass. The merchandise exposed for sale was, however, exclusively confined to specimens of the feathered tribe, who joined their voices lustily to the general din, and expressed their sentiments with simultaneous pertinacity, in every possible variety of note; the bird-fair, I found, is held here once a week, on Sunday mornings, and lasts two or three hours.

To the cathedral at eight o'clock, where High Mass was being sung, followed by a sermon in Flemish. The congregation was numerous, and most of those who composed it were of the lower orders, and had baskets either on their arm or beside them. It is a fine building, but of mixed architecture; and the general effect has been greatly marred by the introduction of an incomprehensible, heavy

screen of wood, painted to imitate a combination of black and white marble.

Black marble, sometimes real, but generally fictitious, seems to have great charms for Belgian taste. It is most profusely introduced in all ecclesiastical buildings, and sometimes has a very lugubrious effect.

A rich altar to Our Lady, had been temporarily erected in the nave, before the entrance to the chancel, as at Bruges, in honour of the festival. In the centre of the super-altar, stood a figure of the Blessed Virgin and Infant Saviour, both bearing crowns and sceptres, and habited in costly vestments. Round this was a temporary rail, the space within which and the altar-steps was carpeted, and boxes of plants, intermingled with massive candlesticks and lighted tapers, surrounded it. At this altar, Mass was said. Along the screen was a gallery, in which were placed the orchestra and voices. The music was very good.

At half-past ten, I went to High Mass at the Church of the Jesuit Fathers, the only one where the sermon is in French. This was also well attended, but the larger portion of the congregation was so absurdly over-dressed, that I was not surprised to hear from some friends afterwards that all I saw there, no less than those who were exhibiting their *toilettes* in the Place d'Armes in the afternoon, represented the *bourgeoisie ;* all the nobility and gentry being at their country seats at this time of year.

Mass seemed gone through with surprising celerity. There was no " aspersion," neither did I see any holy water at the doors. After Mass began, there was no cessation of the music until the conclusion. The Gospel was read from the altar-desk, as at Low Mass, without any incensing or other ceremony, neither was there any addition of candles or acolyths at the " Sanctus." The sermon followed, and the Epistle and Gospel were not read from the pulpit. The preacher was fluent and energetic ; and

many additional persons came in as he began. The subject was from the Gospel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." These words he gave out first in Latin, and repeated them in French, and his remarks were much as follows: —"On a day such as this, he *might* address them with propriety on the perfections of Mary, but he preferred un sujet plus noble encore — Jésus Christ lui-même. Puisque je suis appellé, mes très chers frères," said he, "à vous rompre encore une fois le pain de la parole de Dieu, je vous parlerai de celui qui *est* le vrai pain descendu du ciel, pour nourrir vos âmes à la vie éternelle. Les paroles que je viens de vous citer vous *ordonnent* d'aimer le Seigneur votre Dieu; — eh! comment ne *pas* L'aimer! Lui qui est l'essence de la tendresse et de l'amour. Ah! croyez-le, mes frères, si vous ne L'aimez pas déjà, de toutes vos forces, c'est que vous ne Le connaissez pas de toute votre intelligence.

"Si vous vouliez seulement penser un peu à Lui, méditer Ses attributs, les grâces qu'Il vous offre, les bienfaits qu'Il vous prodigue, les soins dont Il vous entoure, vous apprendriez à L'aimer; vous ne sauriez vous en défendre. Pour vous montrer jusqu'à quel point Il mérite tout votre amour, réflechissons sur les faits qui nous sont racontés dans l'Ecriture Sainte, et auxquels il est clair qu'on ne prête pas toute l'attention qu'ils exigent. Prenons d'abord l'Evangile de ce jour." He then went, paraphrastically, through various scenes in the life of our Lord, narrating them with remarkable point and effect, and dwelling with much tact and judgment on the peculiarities of each; pointing out, in glowing colours, the impression our Lord's manner and words must have produced on the standers-by. All this he brought to bear on his subject, by showing how the beneficence of God was manifested on each occasion, and how all these instances spoke to us of His indulgence, His consideration, His readiness — nay, His desire — to forgive us when we have offended Him.

To confirm this, he called attention to the remarkable fact of His not only forgiving St. Peter after his denial of Him, but going so far as to select *him* for the important office of head of the church and first pope. The only reproach our Lord is recorded as having addressed to him, was so tender and touching, that, appealing as it did to his best affections, it could only have served to increase his fervour and love for his Divine Master.

The triple service imposed on St. Peter seems to be a threefold assurance that his thrice-repeated injury is forgiven. Love is all He seeks, and the love He asks three several times, affords St. Peter three distinct opportunities of expiating each separate offence.

"Aimons donc," continued he, "aimons, mes très chers frères, et tout est effacé. Connaissez Jésus Christ, et en Le connaissant, vous L'aimerez. Méditez tout ce que nous venons de repasser — méditez Son incarnation — méditez Sa vie — méditez Sa mort — méditez Sa résurrection — et . . . . encore plus que tout cela, méditez Sa vie eucharistique.

"Jusqu'ici, mes frères, tout ce que je vous ai mis sous les yeux est authentiquement raconté dans l'Ecriture Sainte; il n'y a pas à en douter, et vous le croyez sans effort — sans exercer votre foi . . . et voilà, voilà où s'arrêtent les Protestants. Ils refusent de se rendre au divin témoignage — à l'autorité spirituelle de l'Eglise.

"Pour eux, la foi finit où commence la nôtre, et tout ce que Jésus Christ nous a rélégué de grâces, de sanctification, de bonheur, par Son divin amour dans le sacrifice perpétuel de nos autels, ils le refusent, ils le rejettent. Ils s'obstinent à ne point vouloir croire à cet amour avec lequel Jésus Christ Se donne à nous, pauvres pêcheurs, dans la Sainte Eucharistie.

"Les Protestants, se renfermant dans leur orgueil spirituel, se retranchent de tous ces élans de reconnaissance, de vénération, de joie céleste, avec lesquels, nous, qui

sommes *si* privilégiés, nous aimons à nous prosterner aux pieds du Roi des Anges, à Le trouver à toute heure dans nos sacrés tabernacles, Qui nous attend, Qui nous attire, Qui nous invite. Etrangers à ces émotions de bonheur, répoussant ces avant-gôuts de la présence visible de Dieu, ils excluent de leur culte cette présence si chère que Son amour ingénieux Lui a sugéré de nous accorder ici bas. Leurs temples sont quatre murs—les autels leur manquent —parmi eux le Saint Sacrifice n'est jamais offert!

"Mais vous, mes frères, vous, qui avez hérité si richement de l'amour d'un Dieu qui nous aime toujours—vous qui vous présentez chaque jour devant Son trône—vous qui vous soutenez de jour en jour de cette Nourriture divine—cultivez une foi vive, mais humble, docile, soumise: n'écoutez jamais l'orgueil de l'esprit, qui serait capable de vous détourner de tout ce que la réligion offre de plus saint et de plus consolant.

"Recevez avec une bienheureuse confiance, des mains de l'Eglise, ces vérités précieuses, dont sont exclus nos malheureux frères. Etudiez devant l'autel, l'amour de Dieu, et fortifiez vous de cette foi consolatrice, de cette espérance en la bonté divine, qui nous assurent de l'ardent désir qui brûle en Son cœur paternel, de Se réconcilier même avec les plus grands pêcheurs."

To vespers at St. Nicholas, a fine church, but peculiarly constructed, having neither screen nor altar-rail; there was also a temporary altar, very similar in construction and decoration to the others I have noticed. The sermon was in Flemish, and the congregation, who drew their chairs round in concentric semicircles in front of the pulpit, seemed very attentive. The preacher spoke loudly, and gesticulated most energetically. The phrases, "Maria onser lieve vrow," and "Maria onser goote mooter," seemed to occur very frequently, and therefore the expenditure of action seemed rather an extravagance, in every sense of the word.

Looked into the Church of St. Michel, a handsome edifice, but on an unusual plan, — the chancel being open all round, and only divided from the apse by columns.

The pulpit is beautifully carved, and represents our Lord giving sight to the blind.

Monday, Sept. 10*th.*— To early Mass at the Cathedral, which was well attended, but by persons of the poorer class.

At eleven, to call on an English Catholic resident, who had offered to take me to the *Maison Mère* of the *Sœurs de la Charité de Jésus et de Marie.* They have two houses in Ghent, between which are sixty-six Sisters. The incurable hospital I visited at Bruges, is an affiliation of this institution. Founded about thirty-five years ago by M. le Chanoine Triest, it is now conducted by M. L'Abbé Decker, who is very active in carrying out a great variety of charities. M. Triest would seem to have devoted his fortune, his time, and his energies to the accomplishment of this work, and his successor appears to follow worthily in his steps.

This order, which, as I said before, adopts the Bernardine habit and undertakes the *œuvres* of St. Vincent, consists of 400 Sisters — all in Belgium, where the entire number of their houses is twenty-four.

Their noviciate lasts a year, after which they remain postulants for six months, when, if they take their vow, it is for life.

Notwithstanding their active works, and the bodily labour they go through, their rule includes contemplative exercises, and the recital of the Divine office.

They rise at half-past three, and go to rest at nine, sleeping on straw. They are allowed meat, except on certain days over and above the ordinary abstinences of the church. There is perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in all their houses, and one Sister always remains before the altar, being relieved by another, more or

less frequently, according to the number occupying the house.

Mass is said daily in the chapel, as, in most instances, they have a chaplain of their own, but when they cannot afford an *aumônier* their spiritual needs are supplied by the *Récollets*.

In this house are 200 incurables, 60 deaf and dumb persons, and 200 infants under seven years, all receiving relief according to their needs. In the other house is an *école gardienne* and an establishment for *aliénés*.

Besides all these *œuvres*, a certain number of the Sisters go about visiting poor and distressed persons, and others attend the sick at their own dwellings, or visit them in the hospitals.

The building is antique and picturesque, and, being on a large scale, is admirably adapted to the purpose it serves.

It is partly quadrangular, but irregular and rambling; and the neatly laid-out garden in the middle, with its bright flowers, is a wonderful relief to the eye, which is attracted to it by the honeysuckle and creeping roses embowering the cloister windows.

The incurables were sitting in arbours or on benches, enjoying the warm sunny air, and were mostly occupied in needlework, knitting, or lace-making; but all looked cheerful and happy.

Some, too weak to leave the infirmary, remained within, sitting up in bed, or propped in easy chairs; but a Sister was with them, going from one to another, and cheering with her pleasant, good-humoured voice their solitary moments.

The portion appropriated to the deaf and dumb was also arranged with much care, forethought, and success.

The children were in their playground, enjoying a romp with all the hilarity of their age, and making almost as much noise with their screams of delight as those who have the full use of the powers of speech.

Above were the rooms appropriated to their use; and, being a recently added wing, they had an appearance of space, order, cleanliness, and comfort, which shewed that much consideration had been bestowed in their planning and erection.

The workroom was easily distinguishable by the neat workbaskets, all precisely similar, each in the place its owner was to occupy.

Opening out of this, was the class-room. Here, in a large case of shelves with glass doors, occupying one side of the room, was a collection of specimens and models, beautifully executed, of every imaginable object in nature, art, science, and domestic life. Each was neatly labelled, and the name being distinctly written, the pupils could not fail to connect it in their memory with this practical illustration. As the Sister said, "*En effet, c'est leur dictionnaire.*" Besides this, they have large black boards, off which they read; maps, pictures, cabinets of natural history, mineralogy, fossils, &c., and all such other helps as their condition requires.

While we were examining all this, the girls came up from the playground, conducted by a Sister, and took their places in the workroom. One of the rules here, is, that every duty shall commence and terminate with prayer; accordingly, they all knelt simultaneously, and, having signed themselves, proceeded to say their prayer, spelling the words on their fingers with great rapidity; but also, as far as I could judge, with much devotion.

The Sisters themselves, here, as well as in all religious houses where silence is a rule, converse by signs when they have anything absolutely necessary to communicate to one another. They are so particular in not breaking the rule, that before conducting us over the house, the Sister who accompanied us begged us to excuse her if she did not always answer us, as there were certain portions of the

house where silence was enjoined, and where, therefore, she would be unable to reply.

She said it was very difficult to make the deaf and dumb girls observe silence; and explained by adding that they could only be detected when closely watched, on account of the great rapidity with which they could address and answer each other. Their language is very curious; besides the regular finger-alphabet, they have signs among themselves, which no one else understands, and which they always use in preference. I remember once seeing a child with one arm, at one of these institutions, who seemed to make himself understood with as much facility as the rest.

During needlework, talking is absolutely forbidden, as with them it of course necessitates a cessation of any other occupation for the hands, and therefore would make them waste much time.

We were next conducted to the *école gardienne*, which has another playground of its own, into which the 200 little inmates were turned. The two Sisters who have this particular charge were arranging their games and joining in their sports.

As soon as we appeared, the whole of them surrounded us, curtseying and kissing their hands, as if we had been old friends.

We next visited the *quartier de la communauté*,—a special favour, as this is rarely shown to strangers, especially of the male gender. Through the various departments which compose it, such as kitchen, refectory, dormitories,—where I must say the beds were uncommonly hard,—*pharmacie* and cloisters, we reached the *chœur des sœurs*, a large square room, or *tribune*, overlooking the chapel, and containing the organ. It is curtained off, but the Sisters can see the altar perfectly from every part of it. All round the walls, runs a bench or seat, where the Sisters sit, or in front of which they kneel or stand, as the case

may be. As we approached, we perceived they were singing the Divine office. The "professed" Sisters, in black veils, stood in a row on one side, and the novices, in white hoods, on the other.

These Sisters are so far cloistered that they do not go out; but of course they necessarily carry on intercourse, as well with the inmates of the house as with those who visit it or them. There is therefore no *grille* in the *parloir*.

Having obtained an introduction for the other house, which, from the nature of its *œuvre* (the care of the insane), is even less shown than this, I proceeded thither at once.

It is an old and picturesque building; and part of it being castellated and constructed on a bridge which crosses the canal, it has the appearance of an ancient fortress. One side rises from a green turf bank on the water's edge, and the old dark russet wall is partly covered with ivy, from which peep out the battlements crowning it.

The gate is studded with nails, but scarcely in consequence of the present use of the house, as kind and gentle usage of the mentally afflicted has here entirely superseded force and restraint.

Nevertheless, there are upwards of three hundred *aliénées* in this house, under the supervision of forty Sisters. The patients are of three classes, or grades, in society. The most numerous is, of course, that of the "*indigens;*" next in number is that of the *bourgeoisie*, or middle class, who pay a moderate sum, and enjoy the advantage of semi-private apartments; and lastly that of persons of family and fortune, who can, if they please, be accommodated with *salons*, *chambres à coucher*, and *cabinets de toilette*, as elegant as anything to which they may be accustomed in their own luxurious abodes. Besides these divisions, there are special wards, padded rooms, and private

gardens for those whose condition renders them dangerous or undesirable companions for the rest.

The house is very extensive, and we were occupied a long time in merely walking over it. Above the cloister, which, as it were, lines the quadrangle, is an outer gallery, very prettily trellised, and intertwined with creepers, serving both for ornament and security.

There is an *aumônier*, and Mass is said daily in the chapel, to which the inmates are allowed access at all times. During the services, however, for fear of interruptions, they occupy a large *tribune*, or chamber, divided off with a grating. While we were in the chapel, one of them stole quietly in, and, having signed herself with holy water, knelt before the altar. This, the Rev. Mother told me, was their constant practice; and they never misconduct themselves at any time while there, generally speaking evincing much devotional feeling.

Of the lower class of patients, those who are sufficiently sane are employed in various ways in the *ménage*.

A large number were occupied in washing in the *buanderie;* but the Rev. Mother told me they often did great mischief, and required so much watching, that their assistance was of very little service, and the work was only given them as an occupation, being a real trial of patience to all who were concerned with them.

Of the second class, about forty were manufacturing lace, and appeared perfectly rational.

One of them exhibited her work, and remarked, with some satisfaction, that when her eyesight was better she had made some much finer than that.

This lace is all sold for their own benefit, and the proceeds, as the Rev. Mother observed, serve to supply them with such little "*douceurs*" as the charity cannot afford them.

In another room were some making clothes for their

own wear, while parties of others were amusing themselves with cards or dominoes.

Of the upper class, many remain in their own apartments, either from choice, or because they are not fit to leave them; but about half-a-dozen were seated in an arbour, formed in their own private garden, which is very tastefully laid out. One or two were engaged in fancy work, two were conversing apparently very rationally, and another was reading. A Sister was with them. The Rev. Mother told me these were all "*personnes de considération.*"

One case she mentioned to me among the patients of this class, was that of a lady of rank, and a very beautiful woman. She had been married at fifteen, and had had a large family, of whom six children were living. At thirty the malady had manifested itself. It grew on her by degrees, and she was now furiously and hopelessly insane. When she first came to this house she confessed regularly, attended Mass, and neglected none of her religious duties; but now she was indifferent to everything of the kind, and was even exceedingly violent at times.

Two Sisters remain with her day and night. Her husband, who is much attached to her, comes to see her constantly, and would make any sacrifice which could contribute to her recovery.

There is a common dining-room for these patients, where all who are not confined to their own apartments meet for meals, unless, as in some cases, they prefer solitude.

There is a separate kitchen for this portion of the house, of which the Sisters have the charge, as well as of the others, but are assisted by servants.

There are several children, of whom some are what is called "simple," or, as they say here, "*innocent,*" and

others semi-idiotic. One was a remarkably pretty child of five years old, and the pet of the house. She has three sisters, all deficient in intellect, and in a worse state than herself. The parents were first-cousins.

Another child occupying this part of the house is exceedingly mischievous, but is not placed under restraint; indeed, force seems quite out of date in the management even of the worst cases. Another was rocking herself backwards and forwards in her chair all the time I was there; and they told me she had never ceased this movement since she first came into the house, three or four years ago, but goes on in the same way from the time she is taken up till she is put to bed.

A third sat in the corner of the room, horribly deformed, and making the most awful grimaces and contortions imaginable.

Among the worst cases was one of a woman who was brought in yesterday with her throat frightfully cut by her own hand. The wound had been sewn up, and it was thought she might recover.

She was now quite rational, and, indeed, seemed to have come to her senses the moment she had committed the act. As soon as she was brought into the hospice, she herself asked for a priest. Hunger and distress were the causes of the dreadful act.

Many of the patients belonging to this department were taking the air in the garden reserved for them, under the care of several nuns.

Among them was a young girl of about twenty, fantastically dressed in a light-blue, loose, muslin *peignoir*. Her hair, which was very fair, was dishevelled over her shoulders; her head was crowned with flowers, and she also had garlands of flowers on her wrists; she was dancing, apparently taking her own shadow on the wall for another person. One who, the Rev. Mother told

me, had a habit of catching and devouring every insect she could find, had her hands muffled; and others, remarkable for unaccountable peculiarities, were walking or sitting within the enclosure.

Several of them made a rush for the door the moment they saw it opened to admit us, but a firm look, at the same time full of kindness, from the Rev. Mother effectually checked them.

I understood her to say that out of 300—for the house is always full—about twenty are cured annually, and about as many die. This is the same average as at Chanoine Maes' Institution. The percentage is less favourable than this at the Salpétrière. She told me they rarely died without a lucid interval, which, of course, is taken advantage of to administer to them the last sacraments of the Church. Besides their own *aumônier*, they are visited by the *Pères Récollets*.

A nun sits up each night, going the rounds of the wards, and only calling up the Nursing-Sisters if necessary. One curious fact she told me, was that of their having noticed the rule of silence observed by the community, and of their having, in consequence, volunteered—though not apparently in a spirit of penance—to keep a three hours' silence daily, and, what was more surprising, they had religiously observed it. The Rev. Mother told me that, as far as her experience went, need and affliction of various kinds were the ordinary causes of insanity among the lower classes, and among the upper, for the most part, "la lecture des mauvais livres."

There is another house in Ghent likewise under Sisters of this order, thirty-four of whom take charge of it. It is for the reception and reformation of "*Filles Répenties.*"

The Rev. Mother, to whom my letter was addressed, being confined to her room by illness, a deputy was sent to conduct me over the house. I first visited the chapel,

where, as is the case in all houses of this order, stood on either side the altar a life-size figure of St. Bernard and of St. Vincent de Paul.

Besides the "penitents" there are two other classes of girls in the house. The first consists of about twenty, too good to be with the penitents, but too bad to associate with the third division. These latter are orphans (limited to twenty), and most of them have been in the house since very early childhood. The class-rooms, refectories, dormitories and playgrounds are all separate.

Being the hour for supper, the meal was very neatly laid out in two of the refectories, on the long tables covered with white cloths, and was served in pewter porringers.

The penitents were occupied in their *ouvroir*, where were seated fifty, dressed in uniform. Some, who for good conduct were admitted members of the *congrégation de la Sainte Vierge*, wore silver medals suspended round their necks by blue ribbons.

Some were engaged in needle-work, and some in making lace; but about half-a-dozen, selected as a reward of merit, were occupied in completing a magnificent Brussels-lace veil "*pour la Sainte Vierge.*" The pattern seemed to me very elaborate, and was certainly extremely rich and elegant; it was designed by one of the nuns.

In the dormitories I observed that, as is frequently the case in Belgium, the beds were placed end to end, and not side by side, as in the generality of hospitals in France and England.

They have a well-stocked *potager*, which supplies the house, besides a dairy and poultry-yard.

Tuesday, September 11*th.*—To Mass at the Cathedral, at eight. After Mass, a relic was exposed by the priest to be kissed by the faithful; nearly all the congregation availed themselves of the permission.

Having a letter for the Curé of St. Bavon, I went after breakfast to present it. He, however, being absent for the vacation, I was very courteously received by M. le Président du *Séminaire*, who gave me a great deal of useful information, and letters of introduction to several interesting *œuvres* here, as soon as I explained to him my object in visiting Belgium.

He spoke of religious orders, of the principles on which they work, and said he was always struck by their practical effect on Protestants, of which he mentioned several instances. He made many inquiries about the state of religion in England, her institutions Catholic and Protestant, and the changes and events of the last few years, of which he seemed to know more than is usual with foreigners. He said our Queen's visit to Ghent had made a marked sensation; that there had been great eagerness to see her, more especially on the occasion of her visiting the Cathedral, which seems to have been highly gratifying to the inhabitants. He added that Monseigneur did the honours, and was greatly pleased with the inquiries and observations made by her Majesty on that occasion. He was present himself, and was struck by the grace and dignity of her manner; but he appeared to think she was too much surrounded by her Court, and that Lord Aberdeen's watchful solicitude to be always near her had given some offence, as savouring of *méfiance*, in the midst of so loyal a people as the Belgians, especially when exercising the rites of hospitality.

He spoke no English himself, but "M. le Directeur," he said, did, and understood it perfectly. The latter had been instrumental in receiving a young English lady into the Church some little time ago, and had stood sponsor for her. She has since resided here, and often helps him through his difficulties in mastering her language.

CHAP. IX.

On leaving the *Séminaire*, I made my way to the "*Byloke*," anglicè, "enclosure," an ancient Bernardine Monastery, almost out of the town, founded in the year 1220, and now devoted to the service of a very comprehensive institution. One building, which forms a part of it, though separated by a small paddock from the main body, is still a Convent of thirty-five Bernardine nuns. In this is also situated the *Pharmacie*, which is under the management of two of them, who maintain the ancient habit in all its integrity, wearing a white dress and black scapular, while that of the rest is of coarse russet cloth, similar to that of the Franciscans, a white collar, and white coif covered with a black silk veil. Their occupation consists of the care of the 300 sick in the hospital, which forms part of the larger building, the remainder of it being given up to the use of sixty deaf and dumb boys.

The buildings and grounds are very extensive, and within the enclosure is a farm, which contributes to support the Institution. The foundation is rich, and seems in a great measure to have escaped the devastations which revolutions and political changes have wrought in other communities. It is true that, in common with other monastic communities, it was confiscated at the great French Revolution; but it seems that religious congregations which took the care of the sick for their object, have always met with more favour than those of a contemplative nature; and therefore, when the popular madness had in some degree subsided, this property once more returned to its original owners. During the period of its suspension,

however — as might be expected — the Abbey did not escape unscathed, and when the nuns revisited their once symmetrical and peaceful retreat, they found the greater portion of it a heap of ruins; a considerable section of the house having been wantonly pulled down, and their beautiful chapel ruthlessly demolished.

Nevertheless, they resolved to turn to the best account all that remained, and, besides the *œuvres* mentioned above, converted another portion of the edifice—now quite detached—into an *hospice* for 200 infirm or *incurable* old men, which is *desservi* by twenty *Frères de la Charité.*

There is only one chapel, which, therefore, is necessarily used in common; a glass screen across the middle of the nave divides it into two chambers, the outer of which is appropriated to the Brothers, while the nuns occupy the half nearer the altar. The first department I visited was the hospital, some of the wards of which are contrived much in the same way as that of St. Jean at Bruges, out of the shell of the former chapel. The roof is of a lofty pitch, and arched; the groinings being edged with stone mouldings resting on carved corbelheads. The capitals of the columns are likewise carved, and give a rich and venerable appearance to the interior. I observed the same defective ventilation, and the same objection as regards the drapery of the beds, as at the Hospice St. Jean. The coverlets or rugs were of a bright orange colour, which had a cheerful effect. The patients seem well cared for, and are allowed to see their friends daily. I was shown the *Salle des Opérations*, the ward for amputations—very completely fitted for the purpose—the dentist's room, and the surgery, close to all of which is a small kitchen for the express purposes of medical preparations, such as "*tisane*," decoctions, fomentations, poultices, &c. The surgical instruments were all neatly stowed away in a glass case, and, among other curious apparatuses, was a gigantic brass

boot with an India-rubber stocking fixed to the top, used as a *vesicatoire* in inflammations of the eyes.

The portion of the building appropriated to the *sourds-muets* returned into the possession of these religious only about twelve years ago, when it was ceded to them *à perpétuité*, by the Government.

For the sixty boys there are four Brothers, who, besides instructing and educating them, do all the work of the house (for there are no servants), in which they are assisted by such of the children as are able to help them, and who thus practically learn domestic usefulness.

Great pains are bestowed on teaching them drawing, colouring, writing, cyphering, and map-making, and it is surprising to see how successfully they have acquired the various trades into which they have been initiated. In carving, turning, inlaying, marquéterie, and a variety of decorative arts, they have executed some surprising specimens of workmanship. Several pieces of inlaid furniture display the taste and finish of a master-hand, and yet they have no instructor but one of the Brothers. Besides the carpenter's and cabinet-maker's *atelier* is one for shoe-making, while another exhibits the looms employed in the production of a peculiar kind of carpet, used throughout this and several other charitable institutions in Belgium.

In one room, into which I was taken, hung all round the walls a complete set of costumes, called *La Cour du Saint Père*, which the Brother told me was used on *fêtes*, in a game of ancient date, representing a papal procession, in which it is a great treat to them to be allowed to take part. These dresses are all perfectly correct in shape and colour, and are manufactured by the boys themselves from prints obtained from Rome.

Two years since, a great ecclesiastical *fête* was held at Termonde, at which the Bishop presided; and, as he takes great interest in these boys, and was anxious that they

should share in the general enjoyment, he paid their expenses thither, and desired they should all appear *costumés* for the occasion, to walk in the procession. Two of the Brothers accompanied them, and the whole party were greatly delighted with their excursion.

This portion of the *Byloke* is supported from several sources :—

1. By those of the boys who, being sufficiently rich, pay an annual *pension*.

2. By a parochial rate, and

3. By a grant from Government. "*Et c'est toujours cet argent-là,*" said the Frère, "*qui nous arrive le plus régulièrement.*"

Over one of the entrances were carved in stone the letters A. M. D. G., seeing which, I asked if it were a Jesuit foundation.

The *Frère* smiled, and answered that it was not, but that *all* orders ought to adopt that motto, for no act which had not the glory of God for its object could be of any avail.

In the Infirmary was an orphan lad of fifteen, who was dying ; a *Frère* sat by his pillow ; he told us the boy had no will but that of his Father in heaven, and was perfectly resigned to his impending fate. He added, he himself could not desire his recovery, as he was now in a very holy state of mind, and if he once left the institution, which he soon must if he should be restored, there was no telling what change might take place in him.

He further said that one great drawback to the usefulness of the establishment was the want of any means of retaining a hold on the boys after their time was up ; that they were then cast friendless upon the world, when they most needed kindness and watchful care ; but they were hoping soon to remedy this defect by the addition of a nest

of *ateliers*, where they might be retained, if not permanently, at least to a much later age.

Lastly, I inspected the *Hospice*, containing 200 septuagenarians, also a most interesting institution, if only for the air of cheerfulness and comfort it displays. The greater number seemed to have laid aside labour and toil, and were enjoying their *otium cum dignitate*, either in the snug infirmary, or the pleasant garden of which they have the *entrée libre;* but some twenty hale and vigorous old men were briskly at work in a carpenter's *atelier*, manufacturing various articles for the use of the house, and thus earning a few sous for their *ménus plaisirs*.

None are admitted under seventy years of age, and they then remain for life. Their friends are allowed to visit them daily. The Brothers pay great attention to their spiritual wants, and many of them die in a very edifying manner.

In the afternoon I went through the "Friday market," passing the great cannon, and the curious old house — of which an archway and turret are now all that remain — within whose walls John of Gaunt first saw the light, also the famous tocsin, "whose name is Roland," and on to the *Hospice des Enfans-trouvés*, which stands immediately behind the Eglise St. Jacques.

It is under thirty *Sœurs de l'Enfance de Jésus*, and, besides the care of foundlings, receives sick children, and holds an *école gardienne*.

In addition to this, two detachments of these nuns give their daily attendance to poor schools in the town. They go at eight in the morning and return at six. Their dinner is carried to them by two or more of the remaining Sisters. The order consists of about 500 members.

I was conducted into the *parloir* through a long corridor, at the extremity of which, within a glass case, were some wax figures, about half-life size, representing our

Lord as the Good Shepherd. The Blessed Virgin was also represented, and St. Joseph, and I was told they were the work of the Sisters. In the parlour were two smaller cases, in which wax figures, dressed in the respective costumes of the boys and girls belonging to the Institution, were seen engaged in various games, all the little accessories being executed with the greatest neatness.

The Mother Superior herself soon joined me, and willingly took me over the house. She first pointed out the *tour*, into which, as at Paris, the unconscious infant is placed by its hapless mother. It is not now, as formerly, turned towards the street, until a bell which hangs at its side has been rung, when the receptacle is immediately swung round to the corresponding opening in the wall, and the living burden being deposited, its unnatural parent must escape with scarcely a last look upon her forsaken infant, as a close surveillance is exercised upon the *tour*. In certain cases the transaction is winked at; but if there is any reason to suppose the "little stranger" to be the child of persons in better circumstances, serious consequences often follow.

These restrictions are very necessary; for, despite all vigilance, it is certain that many of the children deposited here, do belong to families of a far different class from that for which the charity was destined; and, were this strict scrutiny removed, it would be productive of evil, acting as an encouragement to crime, and not as an alleviation of its consequences.

Before this new method was adopted, the arrivals were so numerous — amounting sometimes to as many as twenty in a day — that the house was in danger of being unable to maintain itself. The number is now considerably diminished, but varies, the highest being eleven or twelve; sometimes there are none. To-day brought three.

There are two rooms appropriated to their use. In one of these was a row of about a dozen neat little rocking-cribs with white dimity curtains. However, they do not need this accommodation long, as they never remain here more than a few hours, being sent off into the country to be nursed by women known to, and selected by, the house for that purpose.

With them they remain until they are twelve years old, being looked after by officers appointed by the institution, and their condition and circumstances reported to the nuns. During this time they are sent to the schools belonging to the respective parishes in which they live, and are prepared for *première communion* by the priest who superintends them.

At the age mentioned, they return to the house, whence they are apprenticed or placed in service, as the case may be.

Besides the *enfans-trouvés*, there is in this house a hospital for sick children (*hospice d'enfans malades*), consisting of two wards for boys and girls, capable of accommodating thirty children each, of ages varying from six months to twelve years.

They have an *aumônier*, and Mass is daily said, the convalescent children attending under the care of one of the Sisters.

On this occasion the chapel was full of strangers, being the day on which a "*Congrégation de Dames de la Charité*" hold their meeting, after which they attend vespers. They occupy the choir, and I think I never heard the Psalms better sung.

To the *Couvent des Augustins*, — a very extensive building, having a large church, which is open to the public.

There are here now only twenty-five Fathers and Lay-Brothers, but originally this house must have been intended

for a considerably greater number. It has always belonged to this order.

Preaching and hearing confessions form their chief occupations, besides which they have contemplative exercises, and are cloistered except when sent on missions.

Each Father has his separate cell, but they meet in the refectory for meals. They are not prohibited from eating meat, and, on the whole, the rule does not seem very severe.

The habit is black, much resembling the dress of a secular priest, and the head is covered with a "*tricorne.*"

They have a fine library here, recently rebuilt, the former having been burned down some years back. Fortunately most of the books were saved.

One side of the quadrangle only is reserved to the use of the Fathers, a second forms the chapel, and the remaining two are occupied by the class-rooms, refectory, dormitories, offices, &c., belonging to the college. This is for the education of gentlemen's sons, twelve in number, of the ages of from eight to fifteen years, boarding and lodging in the monastery, and with them of eighty *externes*, all under the surveillance of four of the Fathers.

The cloisters, and grounds for the boys, are of ample dimensions, and the dormitory is divided by oak partitions into separate cubicles, as at Radley, except that here the beds stand lengthways. One of the Fathers occupies a room at the end of the dormitory.

The servitors lodge in the side occupied by the boys, but are admitted within the *clôture*, and attend upon the monks. There is also in Ghent a house of eighteen *Augustine* nuns.

Having a letter from M. le Président for the Superior of one of the convents within the *Grand Béguinage* — that under the dedication of St. Jean Baptiste — I visited it to-day.

Like that at Bruges, it occupies a locality of its own, being inclosed within a wall, the gates of which are shut at nightfall. It is on a considerably larger scale, though much reduced from its original dimensions, being still in the occupation of about 800 Sisters.

There is something extremely curious and unaccountable in the existence of this species of community in the present day, placed, as it were, between the secular and conventual life, partaking in nearly equal proportion the nature of both. One cannot but be struck with the many peculiarities which characterise it, as one walks through the tranquil streets of these Dutch-toy-like little towns, with their trim quickset partitions, clipped box-tree borders, bright gardens and exquisitely clean habitations.

After a short stroll, during which I had to examine the different dedication of each door, I came upon that of which I was in quest. A neat brick wall inclosed its garden, and my summons was answered by the good-humoured Flemish face of a secularly-habited woman-servant at the little grating in the door. After a brief interchange of signs, I found she did not understand a word of French, and had great difficulty in making her comprehend that the shortest way would be to call some one who did. While I was *in medias res* with her, fortunately a Sister appeared, and as she spoke a very tolerable *patois*, I explained my errand. To my surprise, however, she assumed a look of such utter incredulity, that I began to think I must have made some very alarming mistake, upon which I handed her the President's letter, the perusal of which produced an immediate alteration. "Ah!" exclaimed she, "M. de Mulder, c'est différent; pour M. le Président je le veux bien;—autrement," she added, shaking her head, "jamais, jamais on n'entre chez nous." With this she opened the door, and

I followed her across a little paved walk into the house, also the perfection of neatness and order.

She entered the parlour on the ground-floor, and bade me be seated while she went to see if the office was over. As this was not the case, she requested me to tread lightly as we passed the room in which it was being said, and wherein were assembled the twenty-three *Béguines* who occupy this house. The furniture was extremely simple, the ground-floor rooms paved with *carreaux*, and merely a round willow mat under the table in the centre. In the room I first entered, were several sacred pictures and characteristic ornaments. The most striking of these was a small glass case, about eighteen inches square, containing models of all the instruments of the passion, standing on an old carved oak side-table. On the wall hung, in an old-fashioned frame, a glazed plan of the *Grand Béguinage*, as it originally stood. In one corner was an intimation in Latin to the effect that it was founded in 1234, by St. Elizabeth of Hungary; that it consisted of two churches, eighteen convents, one hundred and three houses, a "*Braxatorium*," and an infirmary. The difference between the convents and the houses is, that the former are large enough to contain twenty or more *Béguines*, while the latter are small dwelling-places, calculated to lodge two or perhaps three.

In this convent there were twenty-four *Béguines* and three novices. I was told here, that if at the end of two years these novices become postulants, they take their "vows" for life. I asked what "vows" she meant, but could obtain no satisfactory explanation. Indeed, this is quite a new version of the account I have hitherto heard of their position, all others asserting that the *Béguines* take no vows. Other restrictions she detailed to me were these:—that they are not allowed to speak French in

the community; by which, I suppose, she meant that Flemish only was to be employed. She added, that at one time she spoke French perfectly well, but by this long disuse had quite forgotten it. Though their friends are allowed to visit them, and even to sleep in the house, they never go beyond the ground-floor, nor, under any pretence, enter the dormitories, which are above. Each has her separate cell, and no relation however near, not even a mother, is allowed to enter it. There are spare rooms for the special accommodation of visitors. On the other hand, with the exception of certain religious services at fixed hours, they are entirely their own mistresses; and though, like women of any class living in the world, they may, if they please, visit the sick or the poor, it is quite a mistake to suppose that it is one of their duties, or that there are any obligations beyond those of charity or humanity to compel them. They are allowed—having asked permission — to absent themselves for as much as a week at a time to visit their friends. Many of them employ themselves in fine needlework or in mending lace, or other work which requires neatness of execution, and for this I understand they are well paid.

One Superioress superintends the whole *Béguinage*. Within the precincts stands an exquisite little chapel of recent construction, under the dedication of St. Anthony of Padua. It is of white stone, and in the middle-pointed style, and the interior is richly decorated, gilt, and polychromatized. Many wax-lights burned within, and several persons, among whom were two or three Béguines, knelt on the elaborately inlaid marble floor before the shrine.

In a lodge close by, lives an old woman who takes care of the chapel, and sells lithographed portraits of the foundress, together with little books containing her biography.

Her name was Teresia Verharder. Although a woman of property, she was a *Béguine*, and dying here about two years since, she bequeathed a large sum to build this chapel, in which Masses are said for the repose of her soul.

Being the hour for Vespers, I was not sorry to find myself on the spot, to join in the worship, and once again to witness a sight which I remembered as having strongly impressed me on a previous visit to Belgium, several years back.

The rich sunset was now succeeded by a misty twilight, and as the cheering tinkle of the vesper-bell fell on the ear, the tranquil streets of this miniature city were stirred with unwonted activity and movement.

The noise of closing doors rung through the still evening air, and dark mantled figures might be seen issuing from their unpretending habitations, and bending their steps in the direction whither its well-known tones invited them.

The church was nearly full when I entered, and the effect was most striking. The broad stone-floor appeared strewn with hillocks of snow, as the Sisters knelt covered with their white *failles* or veils. The daylight was waning, and the vast space, only illumined by the dim lights upon the altar, had a mysterious and almost unearthly appearance. Presently the vesper-service began, and the united voices ascending in psalms of praise, added considerably to the solemn beauty and strangeness of the scene.

Benediction being given, after the interval of a few moments, during which each nun extended her arms in the form of a cross, all rose almost simultaneously, and folding, with most surprising rapidity and a sudden rustling sound, their white coverings, laid them in a small square on the top of the head, and returned to their homes.

Wednesday, Sept. 12th.—To the Cathedral early this

morning, and found it prepared for a funeral; but not hung with black, either outside or inside, as in France.

In the centre of the chancel, and behind the temporary altar, was a catafalque covered with black, and on either side two tall lighted tapers in massive silver candlesticks.

Soon the bell began to toll, and the procession, having formed in the chancel, descended the nave to meet the coffin, which was borne in at the west door, on a bier, by four bearers in long black cloth cloaks: the friends of the deceased, who were all men, and about fifteen in number, following. The service then proceeded as usual, the "De Profundis" and the "Dies Iræ" echoing in thrilling but plaintive tones through the lofty building, and the "Lauda anima mea, Dominum," coming in with grand effect at the conclusion, when the priests and acolyths once more stood round the coffin at the west end of the nave, before it was borne forth for the last time.

Before aspersing the coffin at the close of the service, the officiating priest threw a small quantity of earth over it with a shovel placed ready; he then walked back, followed by all the assistant officials, aspersing the people and chanting as he went.

The bearers, in their long cloaks and three-cornered hats, once more came in to claim their burden, which, when the pall was removed, exhibited a plain deal *dos d'âne* coffin, simply varnished.

It was deposited in a quaintly-shaped hearse, in some particulars similar to those used in France. At each corner, above, was a silver ball, from which issued a plume of three black feathers. The centre was finished with a silver Maltese cross; the openings at the sides and ends were draped with rusty black velvet, edged with silver fringe; the driver wore a long black cloak and three-cornered hat. It was followed to the cemetery by three

green and two yellow *vigilantes*. Two *Pères Récollets* follow every funeral in Belgium, for which service they receive a trifling remuneration. Along the quay, to the *Ecole Industrielle*, a winter evening school for the children of the *bourgeoisie*, where instruction is given gratis in a variety of scientific subjects, *e. g.* there are courses of instruction in physics, natural history, mineralogy, chemistry, algebra and logarithms, mechanics, geometry and linear perspective, by eminent professors.

The lecture-room is spacious and well arranged, and the philosophical instruments, illustrative models, and collections of minerals, fossils, and metals are remarkably complete; indeed, these juvenile shopkeepers may be said, in this school, to possess advantages which many an English nobleman's son, educated at home, might envy.

Close to this is the *Atelier des Pauvres*, Belgicè, "*Werkhuys.*"

It is an extensive building, entirely devoid of sleeping accommodation, but fitted up with a vast variety of spacious workshops of every description. In these are carried on spinning hemp and flax, weaving coarse canvas, carding wool, making rope, *menuiserie*, &c. &c.

It is an excellent resource in this respect, that no pauper, however distressed, *need* starve in Belgium; even in times of the severest *chômage*, this chance is always open, and those who choose, are at liberty to avail themselves of it, when other work is not to be had.

Thus, even if a man has been brought into trouble by bad habits, and has utterly lost his character, he can obtain bread for himself and his family, and may in time redeem himself by having recourse to this last hope of the destitute. The wages offered are of course very low, but there is a fixed tariff, and even a superannuated workman, who would be rejected by any master, may earn a trifle, according to what he can do.

There are at present 250 paupers working here. In winter they are scarcely ever fewer than 800; and, at one time, when provisions were dear and labour scarce, they amounted to 1800! This however is the maximum they ever reached.

They begin work at seven o'clock, go to dinner at ten, and leave off at dusk. Some carry their dinners with them.

The utmost they can make is half a franc a day! so that unless a man is starving, there is not much encouragement to seek employment here.

The produce of their labour is disposed of at an annual sale, *au profit de la Commune*, after deducting the expenses of the place and the wages of the *employés*.

It is managed by a committee of six "*bourgeois de la ville.*"

The laws against mendicants are, theoretically, very severe. Their doom, when caught—*flagrante delicto*—is, that they be forthwith despatched to the *Dépôt de Mendicité*, where they are to be put to work in the treadmill, or to other occupations of an equally recreative character, until claimed by (!), or returned to, their respective parishes. However, this sentence does not often come into practical operation, as they are in effect permitted to ply their trade in the streets, and especially at the church-doors, where they attack and pursue passers-by with a pertinacity and a perseverance worthy of all admiration.

To the *Visitandines, Maison Mère.* This house is also called *Les Corsets Bleus*, from the costume of ninety orphan girls, of the ages of from four to twenty-one years, who are lodged, boarded, and educated within its walls.

By favour of M. le Président's letter, I was most warmly welcomed by the Superioress, who herself shewed me every part of this extensive institution, supplying me with the most minute details.

For their original foundation they would seem to be

as much indebted to Madame de Chantal as to St. François de Sales; since, but for her, at his premature death, about twelve years subsequent to their institution in 1610, his pious labours in their behalf would have been of little avail. The lives of both these holy persons are too well known to need repetition here, but it may be as well to mention, that besides the *Visitandines*, which congregation he confided to the care and supervision of *La Mère de Chantal*, he established a community of *Feuillans* in the *Abbaye de l'Abondance*, and of *Barnabites* in the Colleges of Anneci and Thonon, where he is looked upon as the founder of these two orders. He also instituted a congregation of hermits on the mountain of Voëron in Chablais, under the title of *Visitation de Nôtre Dame*, in order to revive the ancient devotion of this spot, long before dedicated to our Lady.

The foundation of the *Visitandines* is said to be due to a vision with which this saint was favoured during one of his retreats at the Château de Sales, in which it was revealed to him that he would one day establish an order of nuns, who would edify the church by the sanctity of their lives, and would perpetuate in future generations his spirit, his sentiments, and his maxims. It is further said, that the person to whom he was to entrust the first germ of this great and successful undertaking was so distinctly made known to him, that, shortly afterwards, while preaching during a mission at Dijon, he singled out Madame de Chantal from among his auditory; and, having felt persuaded that he recognised in her the person designated, he made enquiry, and found she was the sister of his intimate friend the Bishop of Bourges, and widow of the Baron de Chantal. Her present position, previous life, saintly disposition, and perfect readiness to conform to the proposition, which he in less than a year's time laid before her, decided

both to pursue the pious design, and the event has fully justified his choice and her consent.

During the first few years of the existence of the order, the *Visitandines* took only simple vows. They were not cloistered, applied themselves to works of charity, visited the sick, making little dainties for them, and assisting them in all their needs. It was through the intermediation of the Cardinal de Marquemont that, in the year 1618, under Pope Pius V., they were numbered among the religious orders; adopting the rule of St. Augustine, and receiving all the prerogatives and privileges enjoyed by others.

At the period of the death of the foundress, in 1641, the order of the Visitation had eighty-seven monasteries; since which it has spread into Italy, Germany, Poland, Belgium and England. At the time of the French Revolution there were reckoned to be more than 160 houses, estimated to contain between 6000 and 7000 nuns.

There are in this order, three classes of nuns — Choir Sisters, Associate Sisters, and Lay Sisters. The first only are destined for the service of the choir, and sing the Divine office daily; the two latter are not bound to say the office, but only a certain number of *paters* and *aves*.

The number of the whole community in each house is limited to thirty-three, thus divided: — twenty of the first, nine of the second, and four of the third class, unless by special dispensation.

No very great austerities are practised by this order, which was designed to serve as a retreat for infirm women of any age; therefore, besides the ordinary fasts of the church, they only observe the vigils of the Blessed Trinity, Pentecost, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, those of our Lady, and that of St. Augustine, together with all Fridays from Michaelmas to Easter.

After the recreation which precedes the dinner-hour, all the nuns appear before the Superior, who orders what they shall do until the evening recreation, when they again present themselves to her to take her command until dinner-time on the following day.

Every month they give an account to the Superior of their spiritual condition, laying open to her with fidelity, simplicity, and confidence, the inmost recesses of their hearts.

They have two meditations each day, one of an hour's duration in the morning, and the second for half an hour, after compline.

Silence is strictly observed from the first stroke of matins until prime on the following day, from the morning recreation until vespers, and during dinner and supper.

In order that the vow of poverty may be distinctly felt among them, they change with one another their room, bed, crucifix, chaplet, pictures, or any other object to which they are likely to attach ideas of property. The dress is black, and exceedingly simple, both in form and material: a black band crosses the forehead, but there is a white *barbette* round the face and chin, a black camlet veil is thrown over the head, and they wear a silver cross on the breast.

This house has existed since 1622, and undertakes three different *œuvres* — kept quite distinct. First the "*Filles bleues*," who, under the special surveillance of the Sisters, are brought up to be hard-working, handy, methodical, useful servants. Besides the ordinary domestic routine, which includes washing and ironing, they are taught to make lace: at the expiration of their term they are either placed in suitable situations or apprenticed at the expense of the institution.

It is always a great trial to them to leave, and they ever

after look upon the house as their home; keeping up the most friendly and grateful relations with the Mother Superior and the Sisters to whom they owe so much.

At lace-making they excel, having invented a new sort called "*point de Gand,*" which is *breveté,* and being elaborate and durable as well as récherché, fetches high prices. On the occasion of the marriage of the young Duc de Brabant, the *Ville de Gand* presented his bride elect with a complete *suite* of this manufacture, which the *Corsets Bleus* were employed to produce. The value of it was 500,000 francs. Eighty-eight hands, among whom were many of the Sisters, were engaged upon it; yet the work occupied ten months. A flounce, of which they shewed me a sample, preserved under glass, was worth 500 francs a yard, and 4000 bobbins were used in its production.

I saw the girls all at work, with their pillows before them, in a cheerful, pleasant room, brightened by the afternoon sun, as it shone in through the natural trellis of flowers which crossed the open windows. They sang merrily, as their busy fingers threw the bobbins with a rapidity almost inexplicable to an unpractised spectator.

The second undertaking here is a gratuitous *externat* for 350 children of the lower middle-class, and

The third is a pensionnat for 150 daughters of gentlemen, who receive a most complete education, being instructed in accomplishments by first-rate professors in the presence of the nuns.

The class-rooms, play-room, dormitories, courts and garden are unexceptionable. Mass is said daily in the chapel by their own *aumônier,* and *all* are expected to attend.

There were, a short time ago, including novices, in the house sixty-seven Sisters; but fourteen have been recently sent to form another community.

Eight more were despatched to a small village called Marcke, near Oudenarde, to commence a lace-school for the children of that place. The inhabitants of this little hamlet were suffering the extremest distress, and were almost in a state of famine. They inhabit mud hovels, and have literally no beds, sleeping in holes which they dig in the ground, with no covering but leaves. The Visitandines, having heard of their sad condition, offered themselves to instruct these destitute children, not only in religion and in the ordinary school routine, but to teach them how to make *Chantilly* lace, which, being sold for them at the *Maison Mère*, might enable them to contribute to the maintenance of their families.

They have already rescued 200 girls from the ignorance and misery they were before enduring, and a great change for the better has taken place among the people.

CHAP X.

To the Convent of the *Sœurs Noires*, Rue du Chantier, a community of forty-five Sisters. This is the only house they have in Ghent, and is the *Maison Mère*.

There is not much to see in their house, which contains only accommodation for themselves, their office being to visit the sick *à domicile*, poor and rich alike. When they attend the former, they give their services gratuitously; when the latter, there is a payment of from one franc to one franc fifty centimes per day made to the house, which contributes to their support.

They visit the hospitals, and in some places likewise receive penitents.

They were going to supper, and the table in the refectory was simply laid for about a dozen, the remainder being all out just now. They also receive *pensionnaires malades* into the house, and attend upon them, but none are admitted with infectious complaints, though the Sisters make no exceptions to the cases they are called out to attend.

The chapel is not large, and contains nothing remarkable, unless it be a picture representing one of those fearful scenes in the time of the plague of 1500, when these Sisters were very active and useful; and though, in the midst of contagion, in which the nearest relations abandoned each other, not one took the fatal disease.

They wear a long black dress, and on their head a peculiarly shaped round white cap, over which is thrown a black veil.

Their order is the same as that of the *Frères Cellites*, or *Alexiens*, and the origin of both, as well as the name of their founder, is unknown even to themselves. Why they are called *Cellites* is also a mystery ; and, although many reasons have been suggested, none appear satisfactory. Modius attributes the name to the cells in which they nurse the sick, that being one of their *œuvres ;* while Helyot is inclined to the idea that it refers to another of their occupations, that of burying the dead, and quotes Tertullian to demonstrate that the word *cella* signifies a tomb: — "*Sepulchra erunt cellæ promæ in quibus*," &c. To me it seems more reasonable to adopt the notion they appear to have passed over, that it may be derived from the third and more special work to which they have devoted themselves, viz., the care of the insane, who, in former days, we know, were much more frequently confined in *cells* than allowed the liberty and freedom from restraint they enjoy under the modern system of management.

Ascagne Tambourin places their first rise about the year 1310, when the ravages of the plague which laid waste Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and England, rendered the services of such persons extremely valuable.

They continued for a long time merely a secular congregation, bound by no vows, but thoroughly devoted to the arduous duties they had proposed to themselves.

Aubert Le Mire affirms that their institution was approved by Boniface IX. and Eugenius IV.; but that subsequently they embraced the rule of St. Augustine, and took solemn vows, having been formed into a religious order under Pope Sixtus IV. in 1462, at the instance of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. This, however, cannot be the exact state of the case, as there is an anachronism in the record of events. Father Bonani states, with more probability, that it was Pope Pius II. who gave them their constitution in 1459.

These monks are all laymen, and receive no priests among them. They undertake the nursing of the sick, the care of mad persons, the burial of the dead, attendance on the plague-stricken in time of epidemics, and most of their convents serve as refuges or retreats for children, or young men, whose conduct requires temporary discipline and judicious correction, and whose parents place them under their care.

The *Cellites* of Cologne are obliged to be present at the execution of criminals. In many places, and especially at Ghent, they are rich. There, every person who dies leaves them a crown, four *flambeaux* and a *schelin* to each *flambeau* if the deceased be a person of rank. At Maestricht they are also a wealthy order, not only Catholics, but even heretics and Jews being obliged to pay them an *écu* upon their demise.

The only religious observance to which they are bound is the daily recital of the office of the Holy Cross. Their dress, like that of the Sisters, is black.

To the *Maison des Sœurs Maricoles*, who have an orphanage for seventy girls, called also, from the costume of the latter, *Les Corsets Rouges*. The nuns are fifteen in number. This house is exclusively for these orphans, whose treatment is very similar to that of the *Corsets Bleus*. The house and grounds are large, but not nearly so extensive. It was recreation time, and the girls — of all sizes — were enjoying a game in the playground, in which there is a wide covered walk on one side for wet weather.

Two of them were preparing the refectory for the evening meal. A thick slice of rye bread and butter was laid for each girl, with a bason of milk.

There is a chapel, an *aumônier*, and a daily Mass.

The order was founded, about 120 years since, by M. Le Comte Monnier, and was, at first, much more severe than at present, having been recently modified by *Mon-*

seigneur, who has dispensed them from rising to the choir at night, and has allowed them to eat meat.

The habit is russet cloth, with a small white cap and large black veil. They have houses all over Belgium, but it seems to be a somewhat straggling order, each convent being in a manner independent of the others.

Thursday, September 13th.—Up at half-past six, and to Mass at St. Jacques. Like all churches in Belgium, this is sadly built up *à l'extérieur*, with little mean-looking houses —a species of desecration which always astonishes one in a Catholic country. The plan is cruciform, but it is of various architecture, and bears evidence of having been repaired at intervals, and in the taste of each period. It has chapels to the aisles, and behind the chancel are a series of bays ending in an apse. The screen is altogether wanting. On each of the pillars which divide the nave from the aisles is a statue of one of the apostles, and before it a bracket for a taper. A picture of S. Charles Borromeo, by Peter Porbus, forms the centre of a triptych in one of the chapels. The two west towers and spire characterise it externally. I have seen no painted glass in any of the churches thus far. There is a richly carved tabernacle on the north side of the chancel, which is ascended by steps; but in the place of stalls are modern mahogany chairs of a very secular character. The font is new and handsome.

To the *Sœurs de S. Vincent de Paul*, in the Rue du Haut Escaut, where there are twelve Sisters, and where they told us they had another house of six, outside one of the gates, both with the same object, *i.e.* that of housing Sisters, who pass their time in visiting the poor and sick, and receiving day-scholars of the poorer class. One hundred and fifty are instructed here. Together with these *œuvres*, this house now combines an orphanage for thirty children.

The history of this foundation is as follows. It is the

benevolent provision of one individual, a Belgian *rentier*, named M. d'Anspack, who is now of the advanced age of eighty, and who, during his long life, has met with a series of domestic afflictions. His wife and a large family of children have one by one dropped at his side, and his latest loss was that of an only surviving brother, to whom he was much attached. His last remaining daughter was hardly buried when this new misfortune came upon him; and although she was a nun in the convent of the Augustines at Bruges, and therefore to all intents and purposes dead to him, he mourned her loss more than that of the rest: she is said to have been a most saintly person. He is now stone-blind, and the cause is supposed to be excessive grief for his losses. He has had a *Frère de St. Jean de Dieu* — of whom there is a house of twenty-one here — living with him during the last ten years, passes all his time in acts of religion, and devotes his fortune to deeds of charity.

This house has been taken, arranged and furnished entirely at his expense, and he provides in every way for the thirty orphans educated here. At the age of twenty-one each will receive a little dowry.

No cost has been spared in the fittings; all is scrupulously clean and orderly; the floors shine like a dining-table; the beds are snowy white, and the perfection of neatness; there is a large washing-room close to the dormitory; and the refectory, class-rooms, music-room, work-room, play-room and garden, fully bear out the assertion of the Sister that the orphans are "*elevées presque comme des demoiselles.*"

They have also a neat chapel, and the *aumonier* who says their daily Mass, instructs them and the *externes* in religion, preparing them carefully for *première communion.*

The *Mère Supérieure* shewed me a bale of warm cloth and a large package of soft woollen shawls she had been

purchasing for their winter supply. She had not long since returned from the *Maison Mère* at Paris — these being the *vraies Filles de St. Vincent* — where, she told me, the Russian Sister still was, who interested me so much when I visited the house last year. She is niece to the late Emperor of Russia, and therefore Princess of the blood, and fills the post of *Sœur Sécrétaire*, on account of the number of languages with which she is acquainted.

Besides these Sisters of St. Vincent, there are two hospitals in Ghent, that of *St. Antoine*, for 250 aged women, and that of *St. Laurent*, for aged persons of both sexes, under thirty *Sœurs de St. Vincent*, of Belgian origin, who follow the rule of St. Bernard.

These buildings are thoroughly well adapted to the purpose, roomy and airy, with a large garden in the middle.

The inmates are free to receive their friends every day, and go out once a fortnight.

To the *Maison Mère des Hommes Aliénés*, under twenty-two *Frères de la Charité*, the patients being 250 in number, of whom fifty are children.

It is a venerable-looking building, forming a very picturesque object beside the canal from the old bridge.

The entrance is on the other side, and is gained by a little narrow street. Over the large *porte-cochère* is a figure of the Blessed Virgin carved in stone.

The *Frère portier*, who opened the gate, seemed disposed to demur to admitting a stranger, and asked if I had a medical order, without which he said it was not usual to open the wards. "Stay," said I, not altogether pleased at the idea of losing the object of my visit, "perhaps this will do as well;" and with that I drew out my talisman, the President's letter. "Ah, pardon, monsieur," said the *Frère*, "cela c'est autre chose, je m'en vais vous faire conduire tout de suite," and, shewing me into the *parloir*, he went to call the *Supérieur*, who was exceedingly courteous

and shewed me all over the house. Infirmary, dormitories, refectory, garden, courts, kitchen, all were visited, and with them, patients in every stage of madness, from passive idiotcy to rampant insanity. The *Frères* seemed ubiquitous, and were to be found wherever they could by possibility be wanted, devoting themselves to this most trying of all undertakings with a serenity and cheerfulness hardly credible.

Under their persevering and judicious care, many of the inmates are taught to occupy themselves in a variety of ways; and, music having been found to exercise a beneficial effect upon them, those who shew any taste for it are encouraged to play and sing concerted pieces, and acquit themselves very creditably.

Their chapel is handsomely decorated, and all who are able attend Mass therein daily.

There is another house of this description under the care of the same Brothers, but intended for persons of a higher class, whose aggregate payments support it.

A new building, said to be more like a palace than an hospital, is in course of construction outside the Barrière de Courtrai; it is to have all possible modern improvements, and they are to move into it in a few months.

Another handsome edifice, of mixed brick and stone, is being built for the reception of persons afflicted with blindness.

The funds were provided by the charity of a gentleman of property, lately deceased, who bequeathed a liberal legacy to that object.

The *Hospice de la Maternité* is in the same neighbourhood, and is an extensive and valuable charity.

To the monastery of the *Pères Récollets*, behind the church of the Jesuits. Not knowing their hours, I called at an ill-chosen time; for, as soon as I reached the end of the corridor to enter the *parloir*, I began to suspect breakfast,

or perhaps dinner, must be going forward. However, there I was, and intimating to the Lay-Brother who ushered me in, that I was willing to wait, if it was inconvenient to the Superior to receive me, I sent in the President's letter. Scarcely a minute elapsed before the Superior appeared. He was a cheerful, well-looking man, of very gentlemanly manners, aged about forty, and wore the rough brown dress of the order, with cowl behind, cord round his waist, sandals on his feet, and a large tonsure on his head. He held out his hand in token of welcome, and observing that they were just sitting down to dinner (*i. e.* their first meal) insisted on my following him into the refectory, to partake of it with him and the rest of the fraternity.

The number of Fathers in this house is thirty; but being a missionary order, about a third of their number was absent. As we entered, they all rose for a moment, and bowed with ease and politeness; but maintained the silence which is one of the rules of the order. The simple meal, consisting of soup, *bouilli*, and brown bread, was soon despatched, and after a Latin thanksgiving had been said, the Superior conducted me to the various parts of the house. Arrived at the dormitory, which is divided into separate cells, he bade me observe the beds, which are of unmistakeable straw, and sufficiently hard; however, he said they slept very soundly, and never woke spontaneously. One of the Lay-Brothers, whose duty it is to call the rest, is awakened at half-past eleven by a *reveil* in his cell, when he rises and taps at each door with a small hammer. They then repair to the choir for matins till half-past one, after which they return to their beds, and rise a second time at five. They are allowed meat, except on the usual days of abstinence.

Their duties are to visit the sick, to travel about on preaching missions, to visit prisoners, to accompany convicts to the scaffold, and to attend funerals.

They subsist entirely by charity, but never beg; if they are in danger of actual starvation, they may, after an interval of twelve hours subsequent to their last meal, ring a bell, with which each of their houses is provided for that purpose.

This has never happened in Ghent. On one occasion, the *Récollets* of Bruges were actually driven to this extremity, but they did not make the appeal until they had waited twenty-four hours. Their rule forbids them to touch money. When any is given them, it must be dropped into their *capuce*.

Four of these Fathers are always in attendance at the prison, although there is a resident chaplain belonging to it. Only last week they prepared a condemned criminal for execution. It is always the younger Brothers who are chosen for this service.

I was told of a lamentable occurrence which happened not long since, when two of these monks were sent for, to attend two prisoners convicted of the murder of an aged curé and his servant, occupying a lonely house in the environs of Ghent, these ruffians having been tempted to the dastardly act, by a sum of money, which the old man had received for a charitable purpose.

Under the care of these good men, one of the criminals exhibited a most penitent spirit, and gave every hope of his ultimate conversion, while the other seemed to grow daily more hardened, and even when the day of execution arrived, showed not the smallest symptom of remorse. On the contrary, he conducted himself with so much contumacy and violence, that force was necessary to convey him to the scaffold. The *Père Récollet* had redoubled his attentions to this unhappy man, sitting up with him the whole night previous to his execution, and sparing neither persuasions nor prayers in his behalf. These were only responded to, on the part of the assassin,

by insults and imprecations. Not repulsed by this truly discouraging reception, the *Récollet* walked by his side to the place of punishment, but so utterly lost was he to all sentiments even of gratitude or humanity, that he never ceased invoking curses on him, as far as they went together. At length, his last moment arrived; the *Père Récollet*, faithful to his trust, was still beside him, even yet praying for him with increased earnestness, when suddenly the miserable convict beckoned to him to approach. The *Récollet* was half frantic with joy at the thought that at the eleventh hour his heart was touched; but what was his horror on behalf of his unrepentant and lost *protégé*, when he found that the crowning act he had reserved for the last, was to spit in the face of his unwearied benefactor!

The poor *Récollet* was so overcome by the ill-success of his laborious efforts, that he was seized with a nervous fever, during which, his anxiety for the soul which he had not succeeded in bringing to penance was so great, that his life was despaired of, and it was only after some weeks that he was declared out of danger.

The house these Fathers originally occupied was situated where the *Palais de Justice* now is, but was demolished at the time of the revolution, and that they now have was anciently a convent of *Urbanistes* (women). They have nine other houses in Belgium, and there is one in or near London.

Their chapel is large, and open to the public, but the chancel is shut off with a high close screen, behind which the monks sit. The Superior mentioned to me several orders and institutions in Ghent, which he thought it would interest a stranger to visit, and accompanied me to the door himself.

To the *Dominican Convent*, with the President's letter, which once more procured for me a most friendly reception. The *Père Prieur*, who was breakfasting, soon

joined me in the *parloir ;* he is a remarkably pleasing-looking man, of middle age, with an open, intelligent countenance, and was exceedingly agreeable and chatty. In fact, we sat so long, talking and joking, like old acquaintances — for he seemed to have seen a great deal of the world, and had plenty of anecdote wherewith to season his discourse — that I was surprised to find upwards of an hour had elapsed, before I had begun to explore the arcana of the house, or to hear its history.

He had met with several droll adventures in travelling, and told them with a point and vivacity which rendered his conversation exceedingly lively and amusing; and though a Flamand, "*ou plutôt Hollandais*," said he, correcting himself, he spoke French with remarkable fluency, and faultless accent.

One of these recitals arose from his remarking how very rare it was, to meet with an Englishman who really expressed himself readily in French, much less who spoke it with any elegance. He added, that once finding himself in a railway-carriage with an English party, he felt a great desire to enter into conversation with them. They consisted of a young man, his father, and sister: the young man, who appeared equally desirous of addressing him, began by asking whether he spoke English. "Malheureusement que non," said he, "et vous, vous ne parlez pas Francais?" The young man shook his head; but our friend was not disposed to yield his point: finding, therefore, that the "papa" was equally deficient, he attacked the young lady, who, blushing deeply, admitted that she could speak it "*un peu*." This was enough for our enthusiastic friend, and the young man, who was of an enquiring turn, being nothing loth, they forthwith, *tant bien que mal*, opened a discussion upon some abstruse points of theology, the perplexity of which, through the medium of the lady interpreter, can be better imagined than described.

Another amusing story was of his crossing a river in a small boat with a Dutch Protestant Baron, who openly avowed his disbelief in all the miracles related in the Bible, and especially the passage of the Red Sea, upon which a discussion ensued, which he related with much character and piquancy, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy the recollection of having browbeaten and vanquished his adversary.

He knew Holland well, and seemed to think there is but little religion among the Dutch Protestants; though they are fanatical, and more intolerant than the English. No religious habit can be worn in Holland, and there are few convents there. Those there are, are found in the south-west, but they are small and poor.

On his mentioning Père Lacordaire, with whom he is of course well acquainted, I took occasion to ask what foundation there was for the story I heard last year, in Paris, of his having been banished from that city by the Emperor, on account of a sermon in which he had expressed opinions of too liberal a nature.

He denied the statement in toto, and added, he had the best authority for his assertion; a friend of his, who was in great favour at the French Court, having asked the Emperor the question in so many words, and his Majesty having altogether repudiated the idea. He further said, that the sermon in which the offence was reported to have been given, was maliciously twisted into that sense by an enemy of the Rev. Father, who wished to make mischief, but who was well aware that he was imputing to it a signification that was never intended. However, the Dominican Father himself admitted that Père Lacordaire was sometimes so carried away by his enthusiasm, that he actually looked "*ecstasié*," and as if he were giving utterance to inspired thoughts —"*enfin, comme s'il ne se possédait plus.*" That on one such occasion, on a friend observing to him, "C'était beau, c'était divin, ce que vous avez dit ce soir

à propos de telle ou telle chose," he answered, "Comment! est-ce que j'ai dit cela? Ma foi! Je n'en savais rien."

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that he should mistrust himself, and avoid such a place as Paris, where there would naturally be so many, jealous of his great reputation, ready to misinterpret his words and to malign his intentions.

He described Pere Lacordaire's preaching as something totally unimaginable. One day, when discoursing on the Blessed Trinity, he remembered to have seen him so *entraîné* by his subject, that the people he was addressing, awed and overcome by what they saw and heard, and altogether forgetting where they were, rose *en masse*, exclaiming, with one voice, "*Il voit Dieu! il voit Dieu!*" The effect was thrilling, and none who witnessed the scene could ever forget it.

At another time, when holding forth on the doctrine of the Holy Sacrifice, he began by a detailed statement of all the objections that had ever been made against it, and laid them down with so much perspicuity and power, that the audience, taken by surprise, exhibited visible signs of alarm and anxiety; and one man, more shaken than the rest, cried out, "Mon Père, prenez garde; vous n'en sortirez pas, je vous dis, vous n'en sortirez pas." Meantime, this extraordinary man, turning to the other side of the argument, brought forward the Catholic doctrine with such a flow of unanswerable lucidity and eloquence, that he completely overturned all he had before advanced, and the audience, unable to restrain their admiration for his powers, welcomed his conclusion with a loud and hearty burst of applause.

The Rev. Father is now directing an Institution at Sorrèze, near Toulouse.

Père de Ravignan, he said, had ceased preaching except on special occasions, for various reasons; among others,

on account of his health. He added, much as he regretted he should never hear him again, he could scarcely deplore the resolution, as it was a lamentable thing "*que de voir baisser un grand orateur ;*" that after five and forty, it was impossible for such a man to continue to acquit himself with that *verve* and eloquence which, added to his remarkable natural sweetness of manner, had formed the charm of his discourses.* He is said to be making many conversions in Paris, especially among the English.

This was formerly the Convent of the "Rich Clares," who were dispossessed at the revolution, when the buildings suffered a demolition similar to that which laid waste all other religious retreats. The nuns were dispersed to meet no more in this world, and are all since dead.

"Vain was each threat or supplicating prayer,
All driven exiles from their bless'd abode,
To roam a dreary world, in deep despair,
No friend, no home, no refuge but their God."

Their chapel, which, to judge from its remains, was richly decorated, though by no means in good taste, is now a mere shell, and is filled with rubbish. Preferably to restoring it, the Dominican Fathers have built a new one, very superior in dimensions, as in all respects. It is open to the public, and will contain about 1500 persons. It can hardly be said to be yet finished, the internal decorations being still in progress. These are rich, and well devised, but the absence of stone in the main construction is a great disadvantage, as the interior is lined with plaster, and displays a large surface of a newly-invented, factitious black marble.

The *Père Prieur* seemed justly proud of the success of his endeavours to achieve this object, which has been progressing under his own direction ; he says he can only

* This axiom will not hold good in England, while we possess such masters of oratory as Cardinal Wiseman, Dr. Manning, Dr. Newman, and F. Faber.

afford to do a little at a time, but ultimately the whole monastery is to be very complete, and the church he hopes to make one of the finest in Belgium. It did not appear whence the funds come.

The *boiserie* of the altar-rail is handsome, and belonged to the former chapel; but the two altars, whose traceried *retables* form the screen, are of modern carving, being of the finest oak, and enriched with statuettes, the whole admirably designed and executed.

The tabernacle is quite a curiosity, and also belonged to the late convent. It is of tortoiseshell, richly inlaid with ivory. The interior is divided into compartments, which exhibit the instruments of the passion, inlaid. The four columns which supported the roof of this piece of furniture, as well as the mountings, were originally of massive silver: these were wrenched off when the chapel was rifled of its valuables, and it is now fitted with columns, &c., of inlaid wood.

The pulpit, which is only placed here temporarily, is of carved oak, and is the same as formerly served for a reading-desk in the refectory. The organ and gallery are modern and handsomely carved. In the chapel is a group in carved wood, painted and gilt, larger than life, representing St. Dominic receiving the rosary from the Blessed Virgin. It figured in the procession which took place here on the Feast of the Assumption, being carried on a *brancard* by twenty men.

After visiting the chapel, the prior took me over the convent, which is likewise undergoing a great deal of repair and alteration. They have not been very long in this house, having occupied one for a few years in the *Rue de Poivre*.

The *grand parloir* was evidently that which served its original occupants for the same purpose; but the *grille* which then divided the room, and was doubtless thrown down during the troubles, has not been replaced, as *grilles* are not in use among any order of monks.

A wide, handsome cloister, with groined roof, ribbed with stone, and paved with dove and white marble, forms the quadrangle, and encloses a flower-garden. The stone mouldings and bosses are by no means improved by a recent coat of whitewash they seem to have received. The library is extensive and valuable; and they have in their picture-gallery some fine Flemish productions; among others, two of which the authorship is doubtful; but I thought one could only be a Van Eyk, and the other is decidedly a Hemling, and one of the most exquisite I ever saw.

They have a kitchen-garden, paddock, poultry-yard, dairy, &c.

Before the revolution, the Dominican monastery occupied that part of the town known as "*La Rue des Dominicains;*" and the large church called by their name, and used as a warehouse since its spoliation, was their chapel.

It is curiously constructed, the plan being an elongated square or parallelogram. There is no appearance of chancel externally, and, although of great width, there are no columns within to form aisles or support the roof.

A private staircase has been contrived in the thickness of the east wall: this church is about to be pulled down. There are in the present monastery twenty-four monks, including lay-brothers and novices. They have one other house in Belgium, of twelve Brothers, at Tirlemont, in the Archbishopric of Malines.

This convent it was, and not the one they at present occupy, which was the scene of the heartless outrage of the Calvinists in 1577-8. At that time Don John of Austria represented Philip II. of Spain in the Low Countries. He was a man of considerate and prudent disposition, and the moderation of his policy causing the wisest and at the same time staunchest, of the Flemings to rally round him, he determined to do his utmost to oppose the Prince of Orange and his party, including the Calvinistic

leaders. These enemies of the Church would have preferred a second Alva, who, by his cruelties and persecutions, might have driven the people to seek in them, protection from his ferocity.

The act which had just been passed, known as "*La Paix de la Religion*," which secured to the Flemish all the privileges of Catholic worship, was a serious bar to any overt act on the part of the Calvinists; but no measure that could secretly be adopted, short of violating it to their own cost, was left unpractised upon those who remained faithful to their religion.

The day they selected to wreak their fury upon the holy and unobtrusive Dominican monks, was the Feast of Pentecost, 1578, when De Ryhone himself, at the head of an armed band, invaded the monastery during High Mass, put the Superior, the venerable Prior de Borgrave, to the torture, under the plea that two soldiers had been poisoned at his instigation, and, having shut up the fifty-two Brothers in the refectory, proceeded to sack first the church, and then the house, throwing the valuable contents of the rare and curious library into the river Lys, which flows beneath the walls.

Not daring to execute upon them the death they had threatened, with their drawn swords and loaded fire-arms, they effected their object, which was to get rid of their presence in the capital of Flanders, by expelling them on the spot, from their peaceful abode, after which—for a time—Calvinistic fanaticism carried the day.

To the *Maison des Orphelins de Saint Bavon*, a large, important building, close to the Bishop's Palace, or *Nouvel Evêché*. The front, looking on to the street, has been recently faced with small red bricks; but that which overlooks the water is exceedingly venerable and picturesque. It was formerly the residence of the *Châtelains* of the

Counts of Flanders, and since then a prison, in which was confined Jacques Artavelde.

For the last 200 years, however, it has been an asylum for 250 orphan boys, who were originally under lay tuition and guidance; but ever since the foundation of the order of *Frères de la Charité*, by M. le Chanoine Triest, the institution has been confided to their care, and twelve of them are now installed there. In addition to very complete instruction in acquirements of the ordinary routine, including music, each boy is taught thoroughly the trade he chooses to select.

They have a large threshing-floor and mill, as well as an oven; so that the whole process of making bread is performed by the boys themselves. The refectory is a very fine room, but, as at Beernem, serves the double purpose of chapel and eating-room. Here, however, the sacrarium is shut off with massive doors, besides being ascended by several steps, which raise it above the rest of the room.

At the west end is an organ, and in the centre of the south wall a pulpit, which serves for reading during meals, and for the "Instruction" on Sundays. They are of course, carefully taught their *Catéchisme*, and prepared for *première communion*. The boys remain here till the age of twenty-one. The *Frères* have their *communauté* apart; and the Superior's house, which is remarkably well appointed, and is situated next door, communicates with the school. There is a large gravelled playground, and a garden for fruit and vegetables.

The *Supérieur* accompanied me over the institution, most kindly and minutely explaining everything; and then, conducting me to his dining-room, would not let me go till I had tasted some of his Bordeaux, which he called to his housekeeper to set on the table.

M. le Chanoine Dekker has succeeded the founder in

the general superintendence of this, as well as other houses served by the orders of charity.

The boys here are unusually well fed, having meat for dinner every day but Friday, and three times a week for supper likewise. Tea every morning, and coffee on Sundays.

To the *Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne*, or *Frères de Toulouse*, an order founded by Abbé de La Salle in 1680.

This particular congregation settled here at the period of the *Affaire de Toulouse*, which gave rise to Louis Philippe's unjust persecution of their meritorious fraternity. Had the Brother, who was accused of many crimes, been guilty of any of them, it would have been no palliation of the cruelty exercised upon the rest, but his innocence of the charges brought against him was fully proved, though he was suffered to perish in confinement. There are eighteen Brothers in this house, which is called the *Vieil Evêché*, having once been the residence of the Bishop. It is a much more sightly building than the present palace.

Besides being a training institution for Brothers, it receives 250 day-scholars of the poorer class, who are taught Flemish and French, but not Latin. A letter of introduction to the *Père Supérieur* procured my admission within the "*Communauté des Frères.*" He seemed to me remarkably well-informed; and, from the ease of his manner, and flow of conversation, as he spoke on a variety of subjects, gave me the idea of a man accustomed to the best society.

In the library were several of the Brothers studying, with divers ponderous tomes before them. The chapel is upstairs, and here were others at their devotions. The dormitories, which are separate, are on the same floor. In the refectory, supper was neatly laid for the Brothers; separate portions, which the *Supérieur* told me were weighed and measured, were placed for each. This meal consists

of meat, salad and vegetables, with "*pain à discrétion.*" In the *parloir* hung some very creditable specimens of drawing and caligraphy, executed by the pupils. There is a vast playground for the boys, while the garden appropriated to the Brothers is scarcely more than a large arbour. This is a great drawback, as they get scarcely any out-door exercise. The dress is a black cassock, with a large white *rabbat*, and small black cap.

To the other end of the town, to see the *Abbaye aux Bois*, or, as it is otherwise called, *Le Nouveau Bois*, a capacious convent, for the education of gentlemen's daughters, under fifty *Sœurs de Nôtre Dame de Namur*. Of these, some are Lay-Sisters; one principle on which the institution is conducted being that there be no servants. All the arrangements appear to be on a most liberal scale; the house and its extensive grounds are wonderfully well appointed; and, while there is no luxury in its arrangement, neatness, order, space, and convenience have been carefully studied. The rooms, passages, staircases, and cloisters, are light, airy, and spacious; yet all the doors and windows close perfectly, and the bright polished oak floors of the apartments, and marble pavement of the corridors, are so close, that they might be taken for one piece.

It appeared to me in all respects as complete as the "*Oiseaux*" in Paris; and yet a *pensionnaire* may be lodged and boarded here, and receive a most comprehensive education, including algebra, astronomy, physics, and other sciences, not usually considered necessary in the female *répertoire*, for about one-third of the expense! Even such accessories as the beds, with their dimity curtains, and quilts of snowy whiteness, the lavatory, where each pupil has her separate tap and painted zinc trough, and the dressing-room, in which are a hundred polished oak chests, and as many looking-glasses above, standing side by side, must inspire notions of order, such as could scarcely be

given in any ordinary home-training. Besides the chapel, where all meet at eight each morning, when the chaplain says Mass, there is, in the garden, a very neat little oratory, whither the girls are at liberty to retire whenever they please: there is an externat for 300 poor children.

To the *Convent des Térésiennes*, a sombre building, behind a dead wall, the door in which was opened by a secular-looking maid-servant, in the costume of a peasant, who admitted me, through an untidy kitchen-garden, into the house, which struck me as of poorer aspect than usual.

The room was very plain, with bare whitened walls and brick floor; here my conductress placed a chair for me opposite the *grille*, and bade me wait a few minutes.

The *Supérieure* shortly appeared. She opened one shutter, and partly withdrew the curtain, but did not remove her veil. In the course of conversation, she told me that this order is that of the Carmelites, reformed by St. Teresa, who had visions in which she was commanded to undertake the work, and promised Divine protection. Obedience, the mortification of the will, assiduous and almost unceasing prayer, close retirement, with silence and penance, form the rule; these having been declared by the saint to be the pillars of her spiritual edifice.

Austere poverty is therefore enjoined; and the nuns wear habits of the coarsest serge, sandals instead of shoes, and sleep on straw beds. Their object being, by these outward acts to secure their own sanctification, and, by their unceasing prayer, the salvation of themselves and others.

This order closely resembles that of the Poor Clares.

CHAP. XI.

Friday, Sept. 14*th*.—To seven o'clock Mass at St. Jacques. The Friday market was creating a busy stir as I passed. All the wares, being mostly second-hand, and extraordinary rubbish, were spread out on square rags on the stones. It is to be hoped they have some other contrivance for wet weather. The entire stock-in-trade of each proprietor could not be worth five shillings!

A large proportion of the *blouses* whom the market had brought into town, and of women of the same class, were at Mass; others came in, in large numbers, after Mass, to pray.

To the *Bibliothèque de la Ville*, which, as it is now closed to the public, was undergoing a cleaning. Within the glass cases down the centre of the building were some rare and interesting illuminated volumes, some as early as the sixth century.

There is a large cotton factory in Ghent, which was formerly the identical *Cour des Princes*, a gorgeous palace, within whose walls Charles V. first saw the light, according to the most received traditions. His baptism was celebrated with right royal pomp in the Church of St. Bavon.

Great rejoicings signalised the event, the fountains lavishly sent up streams of purple wine from their fantastic jets, "mysteries" and mummeries, masks and merry-makings, usurped for a time the place of commerce and earnest speculation; the brave and steady citizens of Ghent ran riot for the nonce, and never was Venice herself more wild, in the days of her maddest carnival.

We are told that a magic gallery, 200 feet long, which was maintained during this temporary jubilee, in a state of sufficient security to ensure the safety of the thousands who thronged it, was erected at a giddy height across the streets, connecting the tower of the great belfry with that of the Church of St. Nicholas.

This was, for three consecutive nights, profusely illuminated, and threw a brilliant glow over the gay scene in which all Ghent was revelling below.

On my way through the fish-market, I passed the old bridge which goes by the name of *Pont de la Décollation*, so called from an ancient tradition that about the year 1370, citizen of Ghent was condemned to be beheaded on this spot, the executioner being his own son. Nature, however, revolted against the outrage, and the sword with which the deed should have been done, flew from his hand into a thousand pieces.

A carved stone group, commemorating the event, marked the locality until the revolution of 1792, when it was demolished.

I decided on leaving Ghent to-day, apparently to the regret of my landlady, who, after cross-examining me as to whether I had seen everything in the old city, at last came to the new theatre, and the recently-decorated Redoute. Had I seen these? "Ma foi, non," said I, "jamais je n'y ai songé."

"Comment!" exclaimed the good woman, with widely-opened eyes, and in an incredulous tone, "vrai, que vous n'avez pas vu cela! Mais c'est, que tout cela, c'est une des merveilles du monde." "Tenez," responded I, "c'est singulier, je ne me sens pas le moindre envie de les aller voir." "Ah, par exemple!" said the good lady, with something like offended dignity, "c'est que vous avez manqué tout ce qu'il y a de plus beau. Ecoutez moi donc, Monsieur," continued she, as I continued my pack-

ing with unmistakeable indifference, " c'est que tout ça est magnifique: allons donc, que ça ne soit pas dit, qu'un Anglais sera venu à Gand sans voir la Rédoute." And then, warming at the thought of the dishonour I was passing upon the noblest monument of her city, she finished with, " Tenez, Monsieur, je vous le dis encore une dernière fois, pendant qu'il est encore temps, si vous n'avez pas vu cela, vous n'avez rien vu."

I did, however, pay a visit to the University, which is an imposing modern edifice. The portico is Corinthian, and on the model of the Pantheon. The entrance is in the Rue des Marais. It was founded in 1826, by the King of Holland. The amphitheatre, which serves for distributions of prizes, &c., as well as the staircase and entrance, are well proportioned and grand.

The Museum contains a collection of stuffed animals of all descriptions, and other illustrations of natural history, which appear interminable.

In the library are said to be between 60,000 and 70,000 volumes; the students are about 400 in number.

I reached Antwerp in an hour, having to cross the Scheldt in what may be termed a " steam-ferry," now established between the two railway-stations on either side. At five o'clock to *Salut* at the Cathedral, so called by courtesy, as there is no Bishop of Antwerp. Being within the 8^{ve}. of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the service was very fine.

The well-trained voices of the choir were supported by a full band, the wind-instruments and kettle-drums in which, told with good effect. After vespers, the sacred host, contained in a jewelled *soleil*, was taken from an altar at the eastern extremity of the south aisle, and, a crimson velvet canopy being held over it by four gentlemen, the priest, vested in a gorgeous cope, bore it along; a procession, consisting of priests in costly dalmatiques, and

preceded by the processional crucifix, rich banners waving, thurifers throwing up clouds of incense, and a long double file of torch-bearers heralding its approach. Two acolytes carried bells, which tinkled as they walked, while the organ and orchestra pealed forth their glorious strains of harmony, and the whole congregation fell on their knees. The solemn *cortège* descended the south aisle, chanting the "*Lauda Sion*," and ascending the broad centre of the nave, returned to the same altar, whence Benediction was given.

Saturday, Sept. 15th.—Up at half-past six, and to Mass at the Cathedral. It was said at one altar only, that at the eastern extremity of the north aisle. The people knelt close up to the steps — none communicated. Rubens' pictures, I found, were temporarily removed. Apropos of the famous "Descent from the Cross," no one can be ignorant — for has not Murray's Handbook declared it, in the words of the great Sir Joshua, — that this picture was painted for the guild of cross-bowmen, whose patron saint is St. Christopher, in honour of whom, or rather of our Divine Lord, the great artist, regardless of labour and time, made his altar-piece a triptych, and, by doubling the subjects on the doors, resolved to represent five different Christophers. Four of these Mr. Murray describes accurately enough.

In the first —"The Descent"— the body of Our Lord is borne by St. John, St. Joseph of Arimathea, St. Mary Magdalen, &c.

In the second —"The Visitation" — Our Lord is borne, before His birth, by His blessed Mother, when she visits St. Elizabeth.

In the third —"The Presentation" — St. Simeon bears the Holy Babe in his arms.

In the fourth, St. Christopher himself appears, according to the legend, carrying his Infant Saviour on his shoulders across the stream.

The fifth has evidently been too much for his Pro-

testant mind: he says, always in the words of Sir Joshua, "The picture on the other side is the *only* one which has *no* reference to the word Christopher (!). It represents a hermit with a *lanthorn* (*!*)."

Poor Sir Joshua and poor Mr. Murray are both at fault before the mystery of mysteries which came so naturally to second the fertile genius of Peter Paul Rubens. It never occurred to either of them that the "hermit with the lanthorn" is the most beautiful and expressive Christopher of the five,—that it is, in fact, neither more nor less than an aged priest bearing the Holy Viaticum.

Sir Joshua and Mr. Murray, however, are not the only tourists who have fallen into this error. That distinguished connoisseur, the great Roscoe, observes, rather scurrilously for him, when speaking of this picture:

"On the reverse of the two doors are the two pictures, stipulated for so stoutly by the fraternity: one exhibiting the giant in his proper person, and the other an old hermit carrying a lanthorn, with the intention of trusting nothing to a miracle, and lighting the saint safely across the river."

Having for one object in visiting Antwerp that of making the personal acquaintance of the great Belgian author, M. Conscience, I proceeded after breakfast to his house. It is situated outside the *Barrière*, but I had no difficulty in finding it, as he is so well known here; the first passer-by, of whom I enquired, directed me at once. Fortunately he was at home, and as, although we had not met before, we were not altogether strangers, he received me with much kindness and cordiality. On mentioning to him the main purpose of my journey, he admitted he had not gone much into it himself, but expressed his readiness to put me in the way of seeing all that Antwerp had to offer in respect of religious institutions.

He speaks several languages; and, though he has not

travelled so much as one would have expected, has evidently made national character his study ; he expressed very neatly his appreciation of the difference between the sterling worth, but reserved exterior, of the English, and the attractive superficiality of the French.

I said I thought it was easy to see that his Gallican neighbours were not his particular favourites. "That is — and is not — the case," said he ; "as a nation, no Belgian has reason to admire them ; but, as individuals, they make themselves so agreeable, that it is scarcely possible to avoid being drawn towards them." At the same time, he thought, even the most pleasing among them were unable to mask their over weening vanity, and other national peculiarities.

He did not mean to deny that the English also were conscious of their dignity, but they did not *over*-estimate themselves ; besides, they felt that every one else was aware of their worth, and it therefore never occurred to them to thrust it upon others. Sometimes, when attacked, they were provoked to retort, and on such occasions all their national character was elicited ; but even then it was a noble *hauteur*, and not a pretentious bluster.

In illustration of this, he said he remembered being at the house of M. Wappers (the modern Rubens, as he is called), during our Queen's visit to Belgium, when several English officers of rank and position were present.

A French Colonel, who had seen service, had monopolized the conversation for a considerable time, expatiating upon the wondrous exploits of his countrymen. At length, some one who thought enough had been said on the subject, turning to a well-known English General, asked, "Et vous, Monsieur, il me semble que vos compatriotes se sont aussi distingués maintes fois ?" "Oh !" answered he, with an air of supreme indifference, and a look of good-natured encouragement to the crest-fallen Frenchman, "Quant aux Anglais, ils n'ont pas besoin de se louer."

He affirms that the Belgians much resemble the English in character, having remarked in both a certain reserve, sometimes proceeding from superciliousness, but more frequently from dignity. A Belgian, he says, seldom or never speaks to a stranger until he has been first addressed. He also exercises some caution in making acquaintances; but, when he once knows a man in whom he finds congeniality of mind, "c'est à la vie, à la mort."

Speaking of Dumas and his plagiarisms on Scott and others, he told me that one of his latest works, "*Conscience l'Innocent*," was a remarkable instance of the freedom with which he appropriated the produce of the brains of others.

This story was Conscience's own, and he had brought it out, some years back, in Flemish, under the name of "*Le Conscrit.*" Dumas, taking "French leave," and knowing doubtless that books written in Flemish are not likely to be read anywhere out of Belgium, got it translated, enlarged it, pursued the plot, finished it off with a different *dénouement*, and, with consummate coolness, gave to his hero the name of the author to whom he was indebted for the tale.

Conscience was merely amused at the ingenuity of his contemporary; but his friends were indignant at the trick, and threatened not only an exposure but a lawsuit. Dumas, hearing of their hostile intentions, escaped neatly out of the difficulty by anticipating their proceedings. He inserted a notice in his own periodical, "Le Mousquetaire," which began by extolling Conscience as a Flemish author, and went on to say that being extremely pleased with one of his works of fiction, which he thought deserved to be better known, he had translated it, for the benefit of his countrymen, and, as an "hommage à l'auteur," he had introduced his name into the title.

Of course, after so satisfactory an explanation, there was

nothing to be said; and since this time, one after another, all Conscience's books have been introduced into France, where, strange to say, notwithstanding the freedom with which he discusses French character, and hints at the *pars magna* which French intercourse and French influence has had in the deterioration of Flemish morale, they are as popular as in the numerous other countries into which they have found their way.

He maintains that, excepting perhaps the German, the English translations of his books are better than any others.* I told him I fancied they read better in French, but could not get him to agree in this opinion. He asserted that the English language was not only more accommodating, but had more affinity with the Flemish; and, therefore, rendered the idioms more perfectly. He spoke of the French language as being stilted — "*endimanché*" — and conventional, and therefore ill adapted for translating, more especially from languages having a different root.

When I rose to take leave, he proposed to call on me to-morrow with the information I required, promising, in the meantime, to see two friends, from whose joint knowledge he hoped to gather all that could be required.

Called with a letter of introduction on M. Dirckx, Curé of the Church of St. Jacques, and an influential man here; but, to my disappointment, found he was absent, spending the vacation at Rome. I asked for his *locum-tenens*, who proved to be a M. l'Abbé Franckx;† but, though he was very courteous, he regretted he could in no way replace his absent friend, as regarded opening closed doors. He,

* For the English translation of these works, see that interesting and popular series "The Amusing Library."

† This is a favourite termination; I once had a servant at Brussels, who used to boast there was not a single vowel in his name, which was spelled "Cryckx."

however, advised me to call on M. le Plébend of the Cathedral to-morrow with this letter, as a word from him would be all-sufficient. I thanked him for the hint, and took my leave, as I was to be at the Cathedral for Benediction at five.

The service was in some degree the same as yesterday, but much less grand. The chancel was again filled, and many women, as well as men, sat in the stalls.

Sunday, Sept. 16*th.*—To the Cathedral to Low Mass before breakfast, and also to High Mass at ten o'clock. There was a very numerous congregation, but divided between two altars. Just at one of the most touching points of the Mass, which was being sung at the high altar, when all were kneeling at the mystery of mysteries, and the music was rendering, with expressive solemnity, "*et homo factus est,*" there was a sudden stir, and a sea of people—some in shoes and some in sabots—came shuffling and pattering across the nave from the other altar, where Mass was just concluded, jostling the congregation as they passed with most unceremonious indifference, and making their way out at the opposite door. Two *laymen* collected the alms in clumsy wooden boxes, which I thought a bad substitute for the venerable priest in the Paris churches, with his little velvet *bourse à quêter*, and his paternal "*Dieu vous le rende, mes enfans.*" I have not seen any *pain bénit* distributed in the Belgian churches.

Finding the sermon was to be in Flemish, and not having yet made much progress in that language, I proceeded to the Jesuit Church, where the preaching is in French.

This church is under repair, and is a large, handsome Corinthian building. The preacher was young, but fluent and ready: the subject of his discourse was taken from the Gospel for the day, which he made to turn entirely on the observance of the Sunday. It was short, and

not very original. The only remark in it that struck me particularly, was the three-fold reason he gave for the sanctification of the Lord's day. He said it was specially marked as a duty to each several Person in the Blessed Trinity.

First. It pointed to our commemoration of the creation, and therein reminded us of the immense debt of love we owed to God the Father.

2ndly. It was the day which weekly celebrated the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as such awakened our unspeakable gratitude to God the Son; and,

3rdly. On this day, at Pentecost, the Spirit descended visibly on the apostles, and therefore it was that on which —whether as a Church or as individual members of the same—we received all the gifts and graces bestowed upon us by God the Holy Ghost.

There is more appearance of a day of rest here on Sunday than in any other continental town I know in the north of Europe. The *magasins* are almost universally closed, and there is far less traffic in any part of the town than may be witnessed in many districts of London I could mention, every Sunday, where not one or two half-closed shops remain open for the sale of necessaries, to those who only receive their wages late on Saturday, but entire streets carry on their ordinary buying and selling in every variety of article, with the most undisguised freedom.

This is a fact which ought to be more generally known, inasmuch as it shews the injustice of the Protestant outcry against "Catholic desecration of the Sabbath;" a sin by no means to be defended, but surely less reprehensible among those who consecrate the first-fruits of the day to their religious duties, than among those who pass it altogether like heathens, not even recognizing any outward distinction.

The several Masses would seem to have their several classes of worshippers; those at the earlier hours

enable one to judge of the real state of religion. Six and seven o'clock in the morning, on weekdays or on Sundays, are the hours at which really devout church-goers are found before the altars, "seeking the Lord early," and therefore, we may believe, "finding Him."

At the "Messe de dix heures"— though really "*High Mass*" — I was told to-day "ce sont les petits bourgeois," and that at that of midday "on voit le grand monde, et tout ce qu'il y a de comme il faut dans la ville."

On my return, I found M. Conscience waiting for me. He had been unsuccessful in meeting his friends, but would bring one of them with him to-morrow, and I could then cross-examine him myself to my heart's content. I asked him some questions about the education of the upper classes in this country, on which he offered to take me to the Jesuit College, where his son is being brought up; and further spoke of the University of Louvain, as being one of a very high order, and perhaps the best organised on the Continent. It monopolized all the most learned professors, and was besides strictly under religious rule; its object being to unite Catholic doctrine with sound and elegant secular learning.

Speaking of monasteries, he told me he had been making a little excursion lately; and, on his return home through the *Bruyère*, had slept, a night or two since, at a Trappist Convent at Westmalle, a community of about sixty Cistercian monks, living in true primitive style, following the rule of St. Bernard, and subsisting on the produce of their own labour. Their house offers an asylum to penitents, gratuitous succour to the poor and sick, education and support to a certain number of destitute male children, from the ages of six to seventeen. Besides this, they pursue their own theological studies, and lend their assistance, whether in the services or in preaching, whenever they are required.

He also strongly recommended me to visit the *Campine*, quite a terra incognita to the travelling English, and where, he assured me, I should find much to interest me, if only from its primitiveness. He mentioned especially, a very curious old moated fortress-monastery, at a place called Tongerloo, which he assured me was quite unlike any other, being now re-occupied by a congregation of *Prémontrés*, or *Norbertins*, one of the rich orders, who went by the name of *Seigneurs*. Another colony of them occupied the monastery at Everbodé, also in the *Campine*, and a wild and almost inaccessible spot.

At a small village called Montaigu, between Everbodé and Diest, is a church dedicated to Our Lady, where is a shrine, at which miracles are said to be performed.

At Wortel, near Westmalle, is a kind of penal colony, or reformatory institution, originally established by the Dutch in 1822, for the reception of 1000 convicts; but it is not under any religious surveillance, and goes on so tamely, that few people know of its existence.

At a place called Merxplas is a *Colonie Forcée*, under the same sort of management, also but little known.

To St. Jacques for "*Grand Salut*" at four. Here also the chancel was occupied by the congregation, who sat in the stalls. The Blessed Sacrament was borne in procession as at the Cathedral, but the music was very inferior. Besides the large bell, which is fixed in the chancel, and swung with a rope at the Benediction, and also during Mass at the Sanctus and Elevation, a smaller bell, with a sharp, tinkling tone, is rung, or rather shaken, during the whole time the procession walks round the church, and also on the other occasions. It may have a good effect when one is used to it, but it appeared to me calculated to hurry and disturb devotion.

At Benediction a large square lace veil, lined either with scarlet or skv-blue, according to the season, is laid

upon the altar, so as to exhibit one corner, richly embroidered, hanging over the edge in the centre; when the priest takes the remonstrance into his hand, he envelopes it in this piece of drapery, after which it is replaced as before.

This seems to be a custom peculiar to Belgium.

To St. Paul's at five. The church profusely decorated with banners, flowers, and orange-trees in boxes. The music was very elaborate, and the attendance large, but chiefly of the lower orders. There are some good pictures in this church, one of which—"The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy," by Teniers, *père*—has a great reputation. The oak carving of the pulpit and confessionals is also rich and abundant.

The Calvaire outside, which was formerly accessible from the street, has been enlarged and enclosed; so that it can now only be entered by the covered corridor leading into the church.

Monday, Sept. 17*th.*—To the Church of St. Paul. After Mass, a number of poor people remained kneeling, scattered in different parts of the church.

After breakfast, to the Cathedral, where preparations had been made for a very grand funeral. A large number of persons were assembled to witness it, when I reached the doors. The ceremony had already commenced, and the coffin now stood on tressels, in the nave, immediately before the chancel-gates; it was covered with an ample white silken pall, which touched the ground. This was bordered and fringed with gold, a large crimson satin cross ornamenting its centre. Around it stood four huge silver candlesticks, with tall, attenuated wax-candles lighted.

The priests were vested in black velvet, richly embroidered with gold; and the *Quêteurs* wore crimson silk scarfs.

The Mass was sung, but the choir-organ only accom-

panied. The remainder of the ceremony proceeded as usual. When the pall was thrown back, and the coffin exposed, I saw it was, as is almost always the case abroad, of plain oak, with a *dos d'âne* lid; but there were four gilt balls at the corners. The four bearers, who returned at the conclusion to carry the corpse away, wore white surplices. The hearse, which stood at the west door, was fantastically shaped, and there was a great deal of gilding about it. The black drapery, fringed with gold, was fastened across from the middle of each side to the corners, on each of which was a circular glass lanthorn, finished off with a gilt coronet; in these were lighted wax tapers. The centre of the hearse, which was open at the top, also exhibited a coronet. The effect of the white, crimson, and gold pall within, thrown over the coffin and draped with much taste, as it hung gracefully over the sides, together with the black and gold trappings, was picturesque in the extreme.

The hearse was followed by four yellow and green carriages, of somewhat *passé* appearance, but bearing grand coats-of-arms, with which the tattered harness, and the rough, jaded quadrupeds who drew them, seemed somewhat out of character: in one of them was a hired *vigilante*. In one of the carriages sat four gentlemen, all smoking! As the cortège moved off, I enquired to whom had belonged the corpse going to its resting-place with all this would-be pomp, and was told he had been an umbrella-maker, but had died rich, leaving all his wealth to his *gouvernante!*

As I was close to the house of the Doyen, I thought I would take this opportunity of calling with M. Dirckx's letter. As he had not yet returned from the Cathedral, I was requested to wait, and followed his Reverence's valet up a handsome flight of stone stairs, into a very cheerful, elegant sitting-room, carpeted, and hung with proof en-

gravings. Stands of flowers decorated the room, and from the centre of the ceiling was suspended, by scarlet silken cords, a *terra cotta* vase, containing choice and beautiful creepers. The windows, or rather glass doors, draped with muslin curtains, opened on to a broad stone-paved terrace, bordered with flowers, and descending by two or three steps into a very prettily laid-out garden. On one side of this terrace was a conservatory communicating with another part of the house, and at the farther end of it was a pheasantry, sheltered by creepers of varied and brilliant colours. On to the garden abuts the east end of the Cathedral, its rich, carved stone decorations forming a beautiful object from the room, and affording M. le Plébend a commodious private entrance at all hours.

A handsome walnut-tree piano-forte, and a large portfolio leaning against the sofa, and labelled "*Gravures*," combined, with the general character of the furniture, to give it rather the appearance of an English than a foreign *presbytère*. I had not waited long, when M. Beeckmans entered by the terrace; and, on my explaining the ill-fortune I had met with in the absence of M. Dirckx, very kindly accepted the introduction as to himself, and gave me a circular letter for all the places I wished to visit.

He informed me that a considerable sum of money was being expended on the Cathedral: and on my remarking how sadly it was built up on all sides, he said it was, of course, a great cause of regret, whether as a question of reverence, or a matter of taste; but these desecrations had been perpetrated at the time of the revolution, and it would require a long while to efface all the mischief of that unhappy period.

On my return home, I found M. Conscience had already arrived with his friend, M. l'Abbé Van den Nest. Nothing could exceed their kindness. The latter seems to have a thorough acquaintance with the whole system of

religious orders, and to be able to account for every shade of difference in rule and discipline.

I obtained from him a list of all the religious houses and foundations in Antwerp, and also a joint introduction from him and M. Conscience to the Premonstratensian monasteries of Tongerloo and Everbodé, and to the Convent of *Pénitentines*, at Herenthals, all in the Campine. That I might have no difficulty in finding my way in this less frequented part of Belgium, Conscience had very considerately drawn a little map of the roads I was to take, where the railways came to an end.

M. Van den Nest has travelled all over Europe, and even visited London; but, as he remarked, "il y faisait trop cher pour y rester longtems;" and no wonder, since in three weeks he contrived to spend 2000 francs—not very creditable to the consciences of the English innkeepers, &c. A journey, however, he made to Italy, cost him 15,000 francs. This, I suppose, occupied a much longer time, as it produced two very elegantly-written works, called "Souvenirs d'Italie," and "Mont Cassin," in which the author has proved himself a close and faithful observer, and the possessor of considerable classical attainments. He presents to the reader's eye the scattered vestiges of a luxurious heathen age, with the discrimination of a Christian philosopher, and renders the contemplation of the monuments of antiquity as beneficial to the man of religion, as it is attractive to the man of taste.

He told me that, when once travelling in Switzerland, he occupied a seat in the *diligence*, opposite to a Dutch Protestant, when, by some means, a discussion arose upon the doctrine of the Real Presence, in which the Dutchman loudly proclaimed his disbelief. The Abbé, who was clad *en bourgeois*, begged to differ, and asked him whether our Lord had not used the words, "*Hoc est corpus meum*," which his adversary did not deny, but maintained He in-

tended them in a figurative sense; and then, taking him for a layman, he added, with a contemptuous look: "Allez, Monsieur! si vous aviez un petit peu lu et étudié, vous seriez peut-être à même de comprendre ce que *moi* je pourrais vous dire la-dessus." "C'est égal," said the *Abbé*, preserving his temper and his incognito, "dites toujours; je serai bien aise d'être instruit tout de même." The other, who, it appears, had no objection to hear his own voice, did not wait to be asked twice, but started off on the old beaten track, and proved, as he thought, most logically and satisfactorily, that the expression, "This is my body," bore a metaphorical meaning, similar to that of the words, "I am the door." "Vous me pardonnerez, Monsieur," said the *Abbé*, when he had arrived at this climax, "mais il me semble qu'il existe une différence très prononcée entre ces deux paroles. Quand Notre Seigneur a dit, '*Je suis la porte*,' il est très clair qu'Il se servait d'une figure, enfin, d'un métaphore, pour illustrer que c'est par Lui seul qu'on puisse franchir le seuil du ciel—Il a même bien voulu en faire cette explication à Ses disciples, lorsqu'ils étaient seuls; tandis, qu'en déclarant cette parole, '*Ceci est mon corps*,' Il énonce une vérité nette—simple—incontestable.

"Remarquez encore, qu'il n'existe pas d'analogie entre un corps et du pain; et, de plus, que cette déclaration ne servant à illustrer aucune vérité, Notre Seigneur ne se serait certainement pas servi d'une forme d'expression qui ne signifiait rien, ni en elle-même, ni en figure. Veuillez encore observer, s'il vous plaît," continued he, "que Notre Seigneur, Qui trouvait toujours l'occasion d'expliquer tous les métaphores, dont Il se servait, à Ses disciples, lorsque ceux-ci étaient seuls avec Lui, non seulement n'a-t-Il point expliqué celui-ci—qui d'ailleurs ne pouvait s'expliquer davantage—mais qu'Il était déjà seul avec Ses disciples lorsqu'Il le leur a déclaré."

"Et que concluez vous de cela, Monsieur?" said the other, who, having nothing to answer, continued to play

the sceptic. "Ce que j'en conclue est fort simple; c'est qu'étant un mystère des plus solennels, il a plu à Notre Seigneur d'en faire part à Ses disciples seuls, et de leur en faire part comme d'un fait grand, miraculeux, surnaturel, j'en conviens; mais qui n'admettait ni de circonlocution, ni d'explication . . . . ; d'ailleurs, dites-moi un peu, s'il vous plaît, comment Notre Seigneur *aurait-Il pu* S'exprimer autrement, s'Il avait voulu signifier que c'était vraiment là son corps?"

On this, the Dutchman, unable to reply, held his peace for a while. Presently he broke forth again, with a very scurrilous abuse of the Pope, charging him with arrogance and tyranny, in claiming to himself the direction and supremacy of the entire Church.

The *Abbé* said nothing for some time. After a pause, he addressed him, somewhat abruptly, with the question, "Monsieur est marié?" "Oui, Monsieur." "Ah! et vous avez, sans doute, de petits enfans, qui font la joie de votre foyer?" "C'est encore vrai;—mon plus jeune fils a sept ans." "Charmant âge! et c'est, sans doute, lui qui gouverne la maison." "Comment donc, Monsieur?" said the Dutchman, suddenly roused, "vous vous moquez de moi! Ah ça," continued he, bridling up at the very thought of such an affront, and doubling his fist, "je voudrais bien voir cela! Sachez, Monsieur, que c'est Moi—moi seul—qui suis le maître chez moi!" "A la bonne heure! voilà juste où je voulais en venir," rejoined the Abbé; "et le Pape, a-t-il tort, lui aussi, de vouloir être chef de l'église? Allez, Monsieur, je suis convaincu qu'il n'y a personne au monde qui saurait apprécier avec plus de justesse que vous-même, les suites fâcheuses d'un réglement qui placerait le moindre domestique, à sa volonté, au-dessus du maître de la maison. . . . Et maintenant, permettez que je vous dise que je suis prêtre; sans cela, je n'aurais pas pris la liberté de vous répondre avec tant de franchise."

Speaking of preaching; with true national feeling

he insisted that the Belgian preachers were far more earnest, vigorous, and effective in their discourses than the French; who, though they captivated the ear by their flowers of rhetoric, left no impression on the mind. Speaking of Lacordaire, however, he declared that so intense was the effect of his preaching, "que cela me donne la migraine," said he, "rien que de l'entendre; à force de penser à tout ce qu'il dit, et qu'il dit, encore, si admirablement bien."

After my kind and agreeable friends had left me, I went to the *Sœurs Colettines* in the Marché aux Chevaux. These are an affiliation of the *Maison Mère* I visited at Bruges, called also "*Poor Clares.*"

The convent stands within an enclosure, surrounded by a whited brick wall. The gates were open, for the chapel is free to the public, but I was obliged to ring at the house-bell for admittance into the *Communauté.*

Being the feast of the *Stigmata* of St. Francis, it was a day of special observance among the order. The whole community, lay and choir, had been spending the entire day in prayer. One of the *Sœurs Converses* came out to me in the *parloir*, and asked if she should call the Mother Superior; but of course I would not disturb her; indeed, the Lay-Sister told me that she did not expect the Nuns would conclude their devotions before bed-time. There are here twenty-four Sisters, of whom four are Lay-Sisters, and live externally to the community. Among the Choir-Sisters is one aged nineteen, who is just professed, after a year's noviciate; and, like the young lady we saw at Bruges, declares she never was so happy in her life.

The rule is of course a counterpart of that at the *Maison Mère* at Bruges.

There is an *externat* here of 150 children, under the care of the Lay-Sisters.

My conductress shewed me the chapel, from the *tribune*, in which she and the other three were praying. The

chœur occupied by the rest is shut off by a spiked *grille.* That in the parlour was also spiked and curtained.

To the *Sœurs Noires,* one of the *Ordres Hospitaliers,* and similar to the *Sœurs Grises,* inasmuch as their occupation consists in visiting the sick at their own houses. There is, perhaps, no order so varied and numerous as that of the hospitallers; and even those who retain the name of *Sœurs Grises* are not all clothed in uniform, some wearing a habit of light-grey, others of black, and others again of dark-blue. Those I saw to-day are forty-five in number, and wear dark-grey. There is another congregation called *Sœurs de la Celle,* because, while inhabiting their cells, they visit in the town, and live by charity, or rather mendicancy. Others, again, go by the name of *Sœurs de la Faille,* from the large white veil with which they are covered. Those who attend on the sick in the hospitals are simply called *Hospitalières.*

The *Sœurs Grises* of Flanders had always been under obedience to the *Frères Mineurs* of their respective provinces until the reform of the *Récollets,* when some of these Sisters put themselves under their guidance.

In the year 1483, statutes were drawn up for their regulation by le Père Chrochin, provincial vicar, and le Père Stoctlin, visitor of the *Hospitalières,* which were received by the congregations of this order throughout Flanders.

Their rule obliges them to rise at midnight, to recite matins and the "Little Office of the Blessed Virgin," and to remain in meditation and prayer until two o'clock, when they return to bed until five o'clock in summer, and six in winter. After their second rising they say prime, tierce, and sext, followed by Mass, after which they go to their daily occupations, observing silence until dinner-time. After dinner, they return to their work till three o'clock, and then say vespers, occupying themselves with their duties again till supper.

When they are sent to visit the sick, they always go two together, and may not separate; and in order to diminish the chances of too great familiarity with seculars, they never remain more than three days in the same house. When they are sent by the Superior on other business, they may neither eat nor drink without special permission.

One branch of this order, known as *Sœurs Grises de Mons*, was reformed by La Mère Claire Hambray in 1648, and by degrees was finally cloistered by La Mère Jésus Marie de St. Hélène, sister of Jacques de Bruges, Archbishop of Cambrai, in 1689.

She was a woman of great sanctity of life, and left them some very valuable instructions, exhorting them to maintain a rigorous fidelity to their vows, and to entertain an unwearied zeal for all that concerned the well-being of their order. She recommended to them the observance of that poverty which had always been a distinctive characteristic of this reform, and to consult the Superior in all things. She also entreated them to bear in mind the importance of charity and union among themselves, without which the Spirit of God could not dwell in them, admonishing them that through that divine virtue they would be all in God and for God, and that they should, for His sake, bear with the weaknesses they found in each other.

She entreated them to foster no desires, and to cherish no ambition, but that of pleasing God, and to perform every action of their lives with as much perfection as that they would wish to have attained at the hour of their death; above all, never to contemplate any other object than God and their own hearts, especially avoiding censure on the conduct of others.

To the *Capucines*, a contemplative order, following the rule of St. Francis, grafted upon the rigorous observances of St. Claire, since whose time they have sometimes been called *Filles de la Passion*.

The reform of the *Capucines* was undertaken at Naples in 1538, by the venerable Mother Marie Laurenza Longa. The Duchess of Mercœur established them in Paris in 1602. There are about thirty in this house, all Choir-Sisters. The Lay-Sisters are within the community, cloistered like the rest, and two servants, who occupy another part of the house, supply all their wants. The door into the convent is never opened, unless a new Nun is added to the congregation, or, in case of illness or death, to give ingress to the physician and priest, and egress to the corpse.

All other communication is made through the *grille* or the *tour*. There was a very decided appearance of bareness and poverty about the place; and the parlour into which I was shown was cold and comfortless in the extreme.

The Mother, with two of the Sisters, appeared behind the *grille*, which was spiked. At my request, she drew the curtain quite back, so that I could see into the room. It was a large, lofty, bare place, with whitewashed walls and brick floor. A picture of a "*Sainte face*" on the wall was the only ornament. The room was destitute of furniture, and an opening, without a door, led into a wide corridor.

The recluses expressed themselves perfectly happy, despite the severity of their rule, which obliges them to abstain from meat, rise for the office at night, keep silence, &c. The habit is black, with a white cap and *rabbat*; over the head a black veil is thrown. The Mother raised hers partly, when she spoke, but the others kept theirs down.

They wear neither shoes nor stockings; but, unlike the *Colettines*, they have a wooden sole attached to the foot by two leather straps.

Besides the edifying life of Marie Laurenza, there are some very interesting particulars relative to the establish-

ment of congregations of this order, first at Paris, at the instigation of Louise de Vaudemont, widow of Henri III., who did not live to accomplish her pious design. At her death, in 1601, she bequeathed 20,000 crowns to the construction of a monastery of this order, which she further ordered should be the place of her burial.

Her wishes were carried out by the wife of her brother Philippe de Lorraine, Duc de Mercœur, who, in 1606, with the assistance of Le Père Ange de Joyeuse and Cardinal de Retz, finally established them, creating at the same time a new reform, called *Filles de la Passion*, who, on the day of their profession, were each crowned with a coronet of thorns by the Bishop of Paris.

Another foundation was made at Marseilles in 1625 by the Baronne d'Almagne Marthe d'Oraison. This lady, who was left a widow at seventeen by the death of her husband in a duel, disbursed 100,000 *livres* in the construction of this monastery, within whose shelter she retired, after marrying her only daughter to the Marquis des Arts, and there practised great austerities, joined to an assiduous exercise of the works of mercy. It would be altogether foreign to our purpose to pursue these details, however attractive, as they are entirely apart from the congregations which continued in Flanders; and I only touch upon them to give an idea of the extent to which these orders have spread their ramifications over the Christian world.

CHAP. XII.

To the *Maison des Aliénés* (for both sexes), Rue St. Roch. The man who opened the large *porte-cochère* spoke not a word of French, and his only method of making me comprehend the nature of the institution was by pointing expressively to his own head, and repeating the word "*sinnlos.*" There is no religious surveillance here; indeed, it appears to be altogether a private speculation. The rich are in a department by themselves, and pay their *pension;* the poorer inmates are equally paid for, but by their parish, and Government makes up the deficiency.

The *Bourgeois* and his wife, therefore, realise an income; and the difference between this house and those *desservis* by Brothers and Sisters of Charity, is that master, mistress, servants and keepers are all hirelings. The patients are 150 in number. Despite the secular matter-of-fact nature of the arrangements, however, it has at least one feature which would not exist to redeem the character of such an institution in England,—it has its own *aumônier.*

To the *Fondation Terninckx,* quite in the outskirts, a characteristic institution. It was founded about two hundred years ago, by a wealthy and benevolent individual, rejoicing in the uncommon patronymic which has been adopted by the house, for the perpetual maintenance of twenty-four Sisters of an order peculiar to this foundation, whose occupation was to be the training and education of 100 orphan-girls. To qualify them for the benefits of the bequest, they must be the children of people of fortune, who have been left in destitute or distressed circum-

stances. On attaining the age of twenty-one, each orphan receives a little dowry, with which she is at liberty to marry, to enter an apprenticeship, or, if she have a vocation, to embrace a religious life.

Another remarkable condition of the institution is, that no sum of money, be it small or large, no donation, bequest, or grant of any kind, may be accepted. Even a 5 franc piece, if offered, must be refused.

As usual, a high brick wall, but of unusual proportions, shuts out all intruders, then comes a large double *porte-cochère*, with an ominous-looking bell-handle, which I pulled forthwith, for the day was drawing in.

The building itself interested me much, and I must confess I was curious to penetrate further. It had an old-fashioned, hospitable, farmhouse-like look about it, and its wide, stone-paved corridors, oak floors, and staircases, spacious rooms, skirted with oak panelling, and bright brass dogs within the ample fireplaces, made me fancy the old place must have a history of its own.

The large windows, sunk in their deep embrasures, but divided into the smallest possible leaded panes, and shadowed by the ivy creeping luxuriantly around them, with the dark carved oak furniture, were all in character.

I had been ushered in, by a curious little old woman, Flemish to the backbone, wearing the somewhat quaint dress of the order, prim and starched. Being of limited capacity as a linguist, and apparently unaccustomed to visitors, she altogether failed to make out my errand: so, judging help was required, she shuffled off, leaving me to my meditations. Meantime, I began to suspect the hour I had chosen might not be altogether convenient, for, glancing across the quadrangle on to which the windows looked, I saw divers damsels clad in a comfortable peasant-like dress, in which blue was the dominant colour, crossing the court with shining porringers and brass

jugs of milk, homely brown loaves, and liberal portions of butter, which, joined to the sound of a loud call-bell, sufficiently proclaimed the hour of the evening meal.

Presently, the old lady returned with a sort of "double," in the form of another old lady, as nearly as possible a counterpart of herself; and there they stood, looking like the presiding geniuses of the strange old place. Suddenly, I recollected M. Van den Nest's considerate precaution of writing a Flemish letter, lest I should find myself in these very straits; so I put my hand into my waistcoat-pocket, and produced it. Each took the document in turn, looked at it right side upwards, then wrong, and, at last, muttering something I did not apprehend, one of them again disappeared. In a minute or two she returned, with a colossal brass flat-candlestick, holding a majestic tallow "dip," about a foot and a half high, with wick and flame in proportion — a "one to the pound," I should imagine — then, taking the letter between them, they adjusted their spectacles, and spelled and muttered till they arrived at the signature: — "Ah!" exclaimed both in concert, at length, as if immensely relieved, "Ah! dit is von M. Van den Nest? . . . priester?"

"Ya, oui, yes, all right; priester," said I, not knowing what language to speak. "Ah! goot, goot, bien, dit verandred het geval," answered they, in a tone of satisfaction and encouragement; and with that they vanished. A few minutes elapsed, and both returning, the same pantomime of signs, mixed with French and Flemish words, recommenced more vigorously than ever. At last, I made out that a special permission was necessary, and that could only be obtained from one individual, a Mynheer something von something, in some unpronounceable street, near some place I never heard of in my life. By dint of signs, I requested these particulars might be given me in writing, upon which, with an indescribable look of compassion and

astonishment, accompanied by a shrug of something very like impatience, my fair informants answered simultaneously with incredible volubility: "Pourquoi donck écriver? une nom, c'est une nom; Mynheertannisfoncammaerte . . . c'était très facile pour soufenir; langnietstraetoverdebanck. Fous poufoir tire cela." My curiosity in philology was now excited to the quick, and though I did not mean to take any more trouble about the Institution, of which I thought I had seen enough, I resolved to have this jargon put into black and white, to ascertain what it could all possibly mean; after a little delay, for the penmanship was not that of a ready writer, I succeeded in getting it transferred to paper, and the translation was this:

"M. Denis von Kamert, Longue Rue Neuve, vis-à-vis la Banque."

As I must needs pass through the Rue du Couvent, I availed myself of the opportunity to visit one of the houses of the *Sœurs Apostolines*, of which there are two in Antwerp, thirty-five Sisters being settled here, while thirty occupy another house in the Marché aux Chevaux. The entrance is through a stable-yard, at the extremity of which is situated the building. The order, which is partly contemplative and partly for affording instruction to children of the poorer class, of whom there are 150 educated here, was founded about 170 years since, by St. Agnes de Méranie. It has no connection with that of the *Apostolins*, of which the origin is not very certain, but it is generally supposed they took their rise in Liguria in the fifteenth century.

The dress is black, with a white cap and tippet. They are partly cloistered, that is, they do not go out, but there is no *grille*.

Tuesday, Sept. 18*th*.—To the Cathedral at seven. The bells were tolling for a funeral Mass. The coffin stood

supported on raised tressels, in the south transept, at the entrance of the choir, covered with a black pall, having on it a large crimson satin cross, bordered with gold. The arrangements were similar to those at the last funeral, except that one of the bearers knelt before each of the large silver candlesticks which stood at the four corners. The Mass was said at the altar of the first chapel, in the south choir aisle; and in the bay beyond, sat three canons, who chanted the psalms and responses. The organ was not used.

To the *Maison des Sœurs de la Charité*, Place de Meir, where, at M. Van den Nest's suggestion, I asked for *Sœur Lavinia*, who was not long in coming. In the room were portraits of M. le Chan. Triest, founder of the order, and of M. le Chan. Decker, his successor.

This is intended for 150 incurables, and is always full; they are dressed in uniform. The chapel has been constructed with a view to the advantage and convenience of the inmates. There is a gallery, easily reached from the upper wards, for those who are unable to go up and down stairs; and for those who are entirely bed-ridden, there is a pierced partition, through which, when the shutter is removed, they can assist at Mass from their beds. On the ground-floor is another ward, serving as a common sitting-room, and opening into the garden which fills up the quadrangle. The whole is very neat, and has an aspect of great comfort and cleanliness. There are, attached to this, a physician, a surgeon, and a chaplain. M. Van den Nest occupies no official post here, but the Sister said he was "*si bon et si charitable*," that he constantly visited this and other houses, and was always ready to help every one who was in need.

Attached to this is an *ouvroir* for the occupation of the younger and less infirm patients.

At two o'clock, Conscience called to take me to the

Jesuit College. The pupils are sixty in number, and of these, twelve, whose parents live at a distance, board and lodge in the house, separate rooms being provided for sleeping.

They have a handsome out-building or covered court, with a glazed roof, which forms a theatre for their annual *concours*, when the relations of the pupils, and such others as may be invited, attend. They also occasionally perform plays here.

Beyond this is the chapel, a large and handsome Corinthian building, open to the public.

On either side the altar, on brackets, stand two exquisitely sculptured marble groups, the one of Our Lady, and the other of St. Joseph, each with the infant Saviour.

They are masterpieces of art, executed in the purest white marble, and are among the latest productions of Gherts, the admired sculptor of Louvain, who, as I said before, died but a few weeks since.

The course of study here appears very complete.

At the extremity of the large class-room, is a small library, selected for the use of the boys, and above, in a room of some size, and well adapted for the purpose, is a valuable collection of about 20,000 volumes, among which are some rare and early MSS., richly and curiously illuminated.

Besides the chapel, there is a small oratory, more especially intended for the devotions of a confraternity which exists among the boys, and to which, upon proving certain qualifications, they are privileged to belong.

It is a distinction eagerly sought after among them, and they attend the services consequent upon it with much devotion and regularity. The ages of the pupils vary from eight to eighteen years.

The education of these boys is not, however, the only

care of these Jesuit Fathers, who hold *conférences* on four evenings every week; twice for young working men, and twice for unmarried men of the same class, which are numerously attended.

The Father who went over the college with us, though young, was evidently a man of cultivated mind and polished manners. He had never been in England, but had heard much of the church in Farm Street, and knew one of the Fathers there.

He spoke warmly of Dr. Manning, for whom he seemed to entertain the profoundest veneration.

Indeed, to judge by the expressions of affectionate and respectful admiration which his name always elicits from foreign priests, one would almost imagine he was more fully appreciated abroad, than even in England.

There is another Jesuit institution in Antwerp, at which the boys are brought up to commercial pursuits.

On leaving this, we passed through the *Béguinage*, the entrance to which is in the Rue Rouge. It is very much like that at Ghent, but the houses all seem small, and there are no convents. On each door is the name of some Saint, under whose dedication the house is placed. Thence to the *Maison des Orphelins*, an institution dating from 1458, which takes up the male *enfans trouvés* after their first communion. They are apprenticed at its expense, and being boarded, lodged, clothed, protected, and instructed under its roof, it forms the home from which, having assisted at Mass in the chapel, they go daily forth to their respective *atéliers*, returning at midday to dine, and in the evening for mental education and bodily repose.

At the age of twenty-one, they are started in life with a sum of money to open business, and an ample *trousseau*, that it may not be hampered with deductions.

The Superior, who has the entire superintendence, is called by the endearing title of "*Père des Orphelins*," and

the kind and venerable appearance of the present functionary is quite in character with the paternal appellation, to judge from his observations, no less than for the little arrangements he takes a pleasure in making for their benefit. He appears to keep them under a firm but mild control. He has taken the trouble of putting together a series of legends, which are written, or rather painted, on zinc labels, and go all round the walls of their class-rooms, refectory, infirmary, dormitory, and even corridors, all with his own hand, These are of excellent moral and religious tendency, and prove him to be unusually well-fitted to fill the position he holds. Though not under actual religious rule, there is no want of religious care, as the *aumônier* resides under the roof, and says Mass every morning, at which the boys attend, as well as at vespers daily. Private prayers they likewise say in their cells or cubicles, and grace and thanksgiving before and after each meal.

On all Sundays and festivals, they have *catéchisme* and *instruction*, and three times a week they receive religious teaching from the chaplain.

They rise at five; after breakfast, they go to their trade, returning from twelve till half-past one to dine. The meal is always punctual, and those who are late, lose it, unless they bring a voucher from their master to shew they have been lawfully detained: they come home at six in the evening, attend the class till half-past seven, sup, go to chapel and to bed. There are 100 of these boys: the infirmary was empty. The kitchen, on the opposite side of the quadrangle, is large, clean, and commodious; the pewter table-service and the copper cooking-pans shone like silver. They have both their mill and bakehouse on the premises, and bake bread for seven institutions besides their own. There are, of course, servants to attend to all this.

They have meat three times a week. In the refectory,

which is a curious, old-fashioned place, with a reading-desk at one end, are boards, on which are written the names of all the boys. Opposite each name is a hole, through which is slipped a piece of string, about two inches long, with a knot at each end; the names are marked by pulling the string out behind as far as the knot. There is also hung up a large board, with very minute regulations, which they have thus no excuse for ignoring.

The dormitories are particularly neat, and curiously contrived at the back of the premises; being built in a crescent or semicircle, the centre of which is a garden. Round this runs a covered terrace, paved with stone and balustraded, and the little cells, each separate, with its own door, are built within. At each end is a double cell, fitted with taps for washing. The uniform they wear is a brown suit with scarlet collar.

It often happens that the boys brought up here become noted men. There is one at present within its walls who has manifested so unquestionable a taste for the fine arts, that it is expected he will prove a great painter. In a large, old-fashioned room, occupied by the "*Papa*," hangs a curious picture, which was presented to the institution by an *orphelin*, who was fostered here. He became a priest, and, having been appointed to a valuable cure, amassed a considerable sum; for, though extremely charitable, he spent but little on himself. He made a will, bequeathing all he had to this institution, and caused this picture to be painted, in which his humble origin and his obligations to the hospice are made known.

There is an *Administrateur Général*, who manages the funds and all the affairs of the institution gratuitously. This officer is changed every five years. It is one of the few foundations left unmolested at the time of the revolution.

To the *Hospice St. Julien*, another curious ancient

foundation, dating from the time of the Crusades, at which period it was one of many, marking the regular *étapes* or days' journeys taken by travellers on their pilgrimages to Rome or Jerusalem. They were founded by wealthy and benevolent persons, with the intention of supplying the rites of hospitality to such persons, in days when the luxuries of the "*Grand Monarque*" or the "*Belle-vue*" were as yet the uncreated heritage of a future generation. Each wayworn traveller who craved admission at these gates was received with a warm welcome; a fresh log was thrown on the wide hearth, which offered room to all, supper was spread for him, and a simple bed received his tired limbs till morning, when, after Mass said in the chapel, and an ample breakfast, he set forth with one sou in his pocket, that he might not want by the way.

This is the only house now remaining in all Belgium affording evidence of the good old hospitality of Christian ages, and, despite the change of times and manners, still retaining its original practice.

It is true, that whereas in early days the wanderer's staff and the pilgrim's shell were warranty sufficient to procure for him instant admission, it is now necessary that the applicant should be furnished with a printed document, signed by the mayor of the town he last visited, to authenticate the declaration of his necessities.

This is a precaution, of which none will question the prudence; but it affords a tacit evidence of the degeneracy of the times in which we live. Even as certain ages have been characterised by the appellations of "golden," "silver," and "iron," the nineteenth century might be qualified as the *respectable* age; respectability is decidedly the order of the day. Christianity has had its golden age, as well as Paganism, and, notwithstanding the jaundiced aspect its bright tints have assumed in the retrospicient eyes of those to whom it seems "dark," it is

something to say of it, that, whereas poverty was then the magic password which opened men's hearts and gates to the appeal of the stranger and the houseless, it is now the bar which forbids his entrance, and he must begin by proving the claims of "respectability" before they will "enquire into his case." We do not read that St. Martin asked the shivering suppliant, though he was, to all appearance, only a "common beggar," for his "name and address," and "recommendation," previously to sharing his own cloak with him; and it was happy for him that he did not.

Three persons lodged here yesterday, and sometimes there are as many as eight at a time. Occasionally they are allowed to remain two, or even three nights.

The dormitories are remarkably clean and neat, and there are beds for twenty persons.

Besides the guest-chamber, which is small and snug, there is a large refectory, where, annually on Maunday Thursday, a dinner is given to thirty poor pilgrims, who muster on the occasion. The whole repast is *maigre*, but consists of every imaginable delicacy in the way of fish, eggs, vegetables, &c., all furnished, in kind, by rich persons, benefactors of the foundation. The most curious dishes which appear on the table, on these occasions, are statuettes, being figures of pilgrim saints, beautifully designed and sculptured in butter by artists, who make this peculiar department their *spécialité*. After the dinner, the guests carry away with them all that is left.

The allowance for supper, on ordinary occasions, is 1 litre of beer, 1 lb. of bread, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of cheese, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of butter. The breakfast is the same, except that coffee is substituted for beer.

Passing through the Place de Meir, Conscience pointed out to me the King's palace, that is to say, the place of his Majesty's habitation, on his rare visits to this city. It

stands among the other houses, and is a trifle more decorated than the rest, which are all grand mansions. It is further distinguished by the sentinel, who paces before its door. This house was placed at our Queen's disposal when she visited Belgium.

Nearly opposite this, is a magnificent house — a real palace — scarcely finished, which has been built for his own occupation, by a *parvenu millionnaire*, who has made his fortune in trade.

Thence we strolled into the older part of the town, where my companion called my attention to the quaint houses, formerly belonging to the rich Flemish guilds, which once concentrated within their own corporations the wealth and the strength, while they constituted the boast and the glory, of ancient Flanders. That of the butchers is by far the largest and most important. It stands by itself, and has the appearance of some venerable old castle. The material is red and white brick, the size gigantic, and the construction altogether unique. Underground it has arched vaults, formerly the shambles and *Halle*, while above were committee-rooms and state-rooms for the business-meetings and grand banquetings of this important corporation. In the *Grande Place*, at right angles to the Hôtel de Ville, is that of the cross-bowmen, or *Arbalétriers*, recognizable by the inscription which still remains upon its front. Near this, that of the silversmiths, and opposite these, of the cloth-workers, carpenters, brewers, &c.; all handsome old buildings, of architecture characteristic of the period in which their owners flourished. Each can be easily distinguished by its appropriate decorations and emblems, which had, however, puzzled me not a little, when perambulating the town alone, a day or two ago.

The quondam guild of the masons stands a little further on. M. Conscience told me of a curious custom connected with this, viz., that when a new head was to be elected,

it was necessary that the mason chosen to maintain that dignity, should, with his own hands, pull down and rebuild the façade of one portion of the building. If he shrunk from this trial, there was no alternative but to yield his prerogative, and allow another to be elected in his room.

It was extremely curious, as we walked about the town, to observe the countless number of Conscience's acquaintances; I may say, every fourth person we met, took off his hat to him; many of these were military men, and "*anciens camarades*" when he was in the army; and when we entered a bookseller's shop, the *empressement* of every one was amusing; hands were extended in every direction, while the shopmen ran here and there, vociferating, "Bon jour, M. Conscience!" . . . . "Qu'y a-t-il pour votre service, M. Conscience?" . . . . "En quoi puis-je vous être utile?" . . . . "Que cherchez-vous, M. Conscience?" and so on.

As we walked, we got into a discussion upon poets and English poetry, of which he has read enough to be no mean judge.

He was not only enthusiastic, but very acute and perspicacious, in his appreciation of Shakspeare; and remarked that it was worth while to learn English if only to read such an author. Reading alone, however, he said, was not enough for Shakspeare; he was to be pondered on—digested. He added, that when he took down a volume of this all but inspired writer, after advancing sometimes but a little way, he mechanically closed the book; no less carried away by the marvellous originality of thought, and vigour of expression of the incomparable poet, than lost in admiration at the artistic arrangement and dramatic power of the scenes into which the reader is conveyed. I ought to have made notes of all he said on this subject, for it struck me much, and was worth recording.

As I should not see him again, we took leave here, and

I did my best to express the great pleasure his society, no less than his kindness, had afforded me.

Wednesday, Sept. 19*th.*—Immediately after breakfast, to call on M. l'Abbé Van den Nest, but having been detained on the way, by a marriage at the Cathedral, I missed my appointment, and found he had just quitted the house. His father, a kind and venerable-looking man, came down to speak to me, and to explain that his son had been obliged to go out, and would much regret not having seen me: he said it was scarcely possible to conceive how much he had to do; he himself wondered how he ever got through it. Besides his own regular duties, he was constantly applied to by one and another, and he saw scarcely anything of him at home. As to M. le Plébend, he was quite his right hand, and had the arrangement of all ceremonies, decorations, &c.; others, knowing how obliging and good he was, were perpetually asking his help and advice. If there was a *fête*, or a dinner, anywhere in the town, he was sure to be invited; but, unless it was to be of use, he made a rule of never going. His father went on to say, that he was *trop bon*, for he never knew how to refuse any one: "et pour faire plaisir à quelqu'un, il se ferait créver." I told him he had shown me the greatest civility and kindness, and I could almost have guessed his amiable character from the little intercourse I had had with him. I further said, that one object I had in calling was a letter he had promised me for a convent at Herenthals; but this his father declared was quite unnecessary, adding, "son nom seul suffira pour vous faire ouvrir toutes les portes."

CHAP. XIII.

Took the eleven o'clock train for Contich, and thence to Herenthals, intending to obtain a horse or some other means of conveyance to Diest, stopping by the way at Tongerloo and Everbodé; but this was not to be. I had to learn that it will not do to reckon without one's host, for at neither of the two inns, which are all that this once important town now boasts, was there any assistance of the kind to be obtained.

While considering the perplexity of my position, I espied the Curé on the other side of the *Place;* and concluding that he would at least be able to understand, if not to advise me, I walked across to meet him.

I told him I had come here with the intention of getting on to Diest, but that although either inn possessed a crazy cabriolet, neither could provide any sort of quadruped to draw the same; *the* horse belonging to the "Ville de Lierre," had already been hired, and that owned by the "Saumon" was at work in the fields, and his master appeared perfectly indifferent as to obtaining the employment, or putting a traveller to inconvenience.

The priest suggested I should obtain a truck for my *valise*, and follow its driver to Tongerloo on foot: he added, that the *Curé* of Westerloo was going to walk over this afternoon, and it would be a mutual advantage to have each other's company. To this solution of the difficulty I readily agreed, and he offered to accompany me in search of the proposed truck; but, strange to say, no such vehicle could anywhere be obtained, and the stolid indif-

ference of those to whom we applied, and whose poverty-stricken condition would have led one to suppose they would seize the chance of making a few francs, was quite astonishing.

It reminded me very much of similar adventures I have met with in Wales, and the less frequented parts of England, where nothing seems capable of moving the people out of their beaten track.

So much time was lost in this fruitless expedition, that I missed the *Curé* of Westerloo, who I found had been obliged to start at his appointed hour; and, having enquired about diligences, I feared my only chance of getting away from this place, was to take the *malle poste*, which passes through every day, on its way to Gheel, whence, though no nearer my destination, there would at least be a chance of finding a conveyance. As this *diligence* was not to start till six o'clock, I purposed utilising my time by visiting the convent of which M. Van den Nest had spoken, and further exploring the old, battered town, which, from the strange events of which it was the scene, is by no means devoid of interest.

Having read the "*Guerre des Paysans*," one of the best works which have emanated from the pen of Conscience, it was a great pleasure to trace out the spots he has so graphically described, and to repeople them, as it were, with the valiant spirits who made this their stronghold, and defended with their heart's blood, their homes and their liberties.

At this fatal period it was, that the then venerable and handsome town was all but demolished; and though the church and belfry still stand, the present houses are either the patched-up remains which survive the work of destruction, or new erections on a very mean and meagre scale: the great majority of the houses are not more than two stories high. The church, I visited with much interest,

as having been, by the first barbarous and lawless attack, converted in one moment from a scene of calm and holy worship into one of cowardly, sanguinary, and sacrilegious violence. It is a fine old building, and gives evidence of the former importance of the place. It is calculated to hold about 3000 persons, and, though ruthlessly despoiled, still shews traces of its quondam magnificence. The walls are adorned with many pictures, and one—"The Decollation of St. John the Baptist"—seemed to be an original of the Flemish school, possessing much merit. The pulpit is a handsome piece of carving.

The Convent of *Pénitentines*, also a locale which occupied an important *rôle* in the "war of the peasants," stands on a pleasing eminence, a little out of the town. With its farm and gardens, it covers a considerable patch of land, and the castellated character of the old building, with its postern gate and wall, give it an important appearance. The house stands back, separated by a garden from the wall which surrounds it, though one wing, apparently recently added, and which serves for an *externat*, connects them.

A new chapel is at this moment in course of construction, and the garden was, therefore, strewed with blocks of stone, scaffold-poles, ladders, and other implements of masonry; while, with the exception of the lowing of cattle, and the shriller notes of the poultry-yard, the sounds of workmen were the only tones which broke the stillness of the air. When I had rung the loud bell which hung beside the entrance, the *Sœur tourière* approached the wicket, veiled, and enquired my business. I sent in M. Van den Nest's letter, and then followed the usual preliminaries. The *parloir*, however, in this case, was a smart, cheerful room, and offered a striking contrast to the other side of the *grille*, which was now revealed by the arrival of the Rev. Mother, who removed the curtain and greeted me very cordially.

She wore the habit of St. Francis in all its unmitigated roughness. It was of coarse russet cloth, and the white cap was curiously pinned up into a square on the top of the head. A black cloth cross was sewn on the breast, and a black veil of large size thrown over her head.

Her dress was confined at the waist with a knotted cord, through which was passed a discipline; a rosary hung on the other side, and her feet were bare, except that a pair of sandals protected the soles from the ground.

This order, a reform of the *Tiers Ordre de St. François*, originated in the early part of the seventeenth century, its founders being a certain Madame de Récy and her daughter Odille, who afterwards took the names of Françoise and Claire-Françoise. Young, beautiful, and rich, Odille was sought in marriage by numberless suitors, but, from her earliest infancy, she had entertained such opposite ideas and intentions, that she seemed to be awaiting only a more mature period of life to carry them into execution; and, on the death of her father, she, with her mother, withdrew from the world, built an extensive convent at *Salins* in Burgundy, and adopted the rule of St. Francis, placing herself and her nuns under the direction of some Franciscan monks, who occupied a monastery within the same diocese.

Other houses soon emanated from this one; Madame de Récy became Superioress of one at Verceil, and that at Lyons was visited by Marie de Medicis, who herself laid the first stone of the convent and its chapel, and assisted at the *clôture* of the nuns, who were professed within its walls. Pope Urban VIII. confirmed to this order its rights and privileges.

Their rule is nearly similar to that of the monks of the same reform. They sleep in sheets of woollen. They are allowed to wear woollen socks from the Feast of St. Francis to the 1st. May; they have two hours of manual

labour daily. Their regulations only permit them to go to the *grille* accompanied by one or more Sisters, and permission to unveil or draw aside the curtain must be obtained from the Superioress.

Some confusion has arisen, owing to their name of *Pénitentes* or *Pénitentines*, which has led many to suppose, and even to assert, that this order was composed of "penitents," or women who had formerly led disorderly lives; so far, however, is this from being correct, that none are admitted but those of irreproachable character, and the name is derived from the fact that the whole of the *Tiers Ordre de St. François* is called the *Ordre de la Pénitence.* There are twenty-four nuns in this house, and their *Maison Mère* is at Arendonck. Besides the *externat* for 150 children, they receive about four-and-twenty *pensionnaires*, partly for education and partly for health, on account of the salubrity of the air, said to possess remarkably restorative qualities.

I went over the house, which is very old-fashioned in construction. One wing belongs to the Nuns exclusively, the rest is appropriated to the use of the *pensionnaires*, and is distributed accordingly. The dormitories are large, square, airy rooms, with oak floors, and divided by snowy curtains into little *chambrettes.*

There is a farm attached, and the garden which surrounds the house is nicely laid out, and offers varieties of acclivity, no less than diversities of turf, water, flower-borders, and gravel walks.

The garden reserved for the Sisters is large, but disposed without any regard to ornamentation.

The spot has been occupied by its present inhabitants about fourteen years. It was originally a convent of *Norbertines*, who had had possession of it ever since the foundation of their order by St. Norbert, Bishop of Magdeburg, in the twelfth century. When the revolution came

with all its horrors, they were swept away with the rest, and dispersed in various directions, but never re-united, and are now all dead. Indeed, there are only two houses of women of this order existing; one near Breda in Holland, and the other on the borders of Germany.

There are eight houses of men, of which four are in Belgium, all in the diocese of Malines; one of eighteen monks at Grimberghen, near Brussels; one of fourteen at Parck, not far from Louvain; one of thirty at Everbodé, and one of forty-two at Tongerloo. They are called *Norbertins*, or Prémonstratensians, and once had as many as thirty-five monasteries in England.

Like other sequestrated property, the convent at Herenthals was, after the revolution, offered for sale to the highest bidder; and as but few Catholics would wish to possess anything so acquired, the competition remained chiefly between the Dutch and English Protestants. This fell into the hands of an English speculator, who amassed a considerable fortune by buying up confiscated estates. He no sooner obtained possession of it, than he began destroying the chapel, which had been very costly and beautiful, but when *in medias res* with his work of demolition, he was suddenly arrested by an unforeseen obstacle. One of the masons dropped down dead, and the rest, struck with awe and remorse, in the presence of so signal a warning, steadfastly united in refusing to render any further assistance in the sacrilegious labour. The chapel, therefore, remains as it was left on that day, a standing monument of the rapacity and vandalism of the Englishman, whose name thenceforward became a byword and a reproach among the simple-minded and outraged inhabitants.

He lost successively his wife and all his children; and, dying without heirs, the property once more came into the market, and returned to ecclesiastical uses under the present community, who, as far as their means enable them, are gradually but busily restoring it.

Hearing there was a *Béguinage* at Herenthals, I tried to make my way thither, but could meet with no one in the least capable of comprehending what I wanted. At length, finding the word "*Beguinhof*" was understood, I persevered, and was told, in orthodox Flemish, to go *over de water;* I therefore made for the bridge, and once on the other side, I soon discovered the object of my search. It is, as nearly as possible, a counterpart of those I have already seen; indeed, it is wonderful to observe how the family-likeness is maintained in these little communities. The Béguines occupy about a third of it, living two, three, and four in a house, according to the size; but there are only thirty of them remaining here, and the houses they do not use are let, the rents producing the revenue on which they live.

The church, which, as usual, stands about the centre of the enclosure, proclaims the number of Béguines to have been at one time considerable. The places allotted especially to them are distinguished by being enclosed like the old square pews in English village-churches, except that they are lower, and are guiltless either of seats or hassocks. The remainder of the church is left free to the public, who use chairs. They have two Masses daily, and High Mass on Sundays and Thursdays; also vespers every evening, but without a priest, except on Sundays, although they have an *aumônier* of their own. One of the Sisters acts as *Sacristaine.* They are all Flemish, only one of them speaking French, and that very imperfectly. Herenthals has a large hospital, served by about forty *Hospitalières Augustines.*

Following the advice of the good priest of Herenthals, I now returned to the "Saumon," which serves as *bureau de diligence,* and asked for a place for Gheel. The clumsy, and by no means inviting, vehicle stood in the yard, and the inn being even less tempting, I got into my seat at

once, intending to occupy myself there with a book, until the horses were put to, which I was told would be in about half an hour. However, I waited one half-hour, and two, without any interruption to my studies, when, beginning to apprehend some misunderstanding, I jumped out, and demanded an explanation of this strange delay. I was told it was all right, that sometimes they were necessarily late in starting, because, being a Government concern, they were bound to wait for the last train from Contich. Vexed at losing so much time, but rejoiced to find matters were no worse, I again crept into my lugubrious and crazy den, and waited patiently for another half-hour; but all continued tranquil, without signs either of fellow-passengers or horses. Even the *conducteur* and the driver, who had been occupied in the yard, had now disappeared, so I once more emerged, and again made my appearance in the inn-kitchen, and enquired of mine host of the "Saumon" whether he thought I had taken my place for the pleasure of remaining stationary in it. The master of the "Saumon" looked provokingly unconcerned, and contented himself with answering, with a shrug, "Je n'y puis rien, Monsieur; si l'on part, naturellement vous partirez avec; si non, vous resterez comme les autres." "Comment que je resterai?" said I, somewhat indignant at the fellow's coolness, "qu'est-ce que cela signifie, s'il vous plaît?" "Cela signifie qu'il est plus que probable que, comme j'ai l'honneur de vous le dire, vous ne partirez pas du tout ce soir." "Allons donc, plaisantez vous par hasard?" said I, finding it disagreeably difficult to imagine myself reduced to such an extremity. "Du tout, Monsieur; il paraît qu'il est arrivé un accident au chemin de fer; nous n'en connaissons pas encore les détails, mais on a envoyé un courrier pour défendre à la diligence de partir."

Hearing this, I determined to run down to the Station, to ascertain the real state of affairs; arrived there, all was

consternation and confusion; and, from one or two who could just speak a few words of French, I extracted a distinct confirmation of the statement made at the "Saumon." It was not until after waiting there an hour, that news arrived that no serious consequence had followed the accident, that a portion of the machinery had given way, and that they had sent back to Contich for another engine, with which they expected shortly to arrive.

It was now so late, that the *conducteur* of the diligence declared his determination not to make the journey to-night, and, however vexatious, there was nothing for it but to submit. "Monsieur a peut-être affaire à Gheel," said a civil-spoken young man, stepping out of the Station, of which he was apparently an official. "Au contraire," said I, "je me rends à Gheel tout bonnement pour arriver à Tongerloo." "Dans ce cas-là," replied he, "Monsieur ne doit pas aller à Gheel; ce serait beaucoup de chemin perdu, et d'ailleurs, c'est un endroit que, naturellement, on éviterait autant que possible." "Et pourquoi cela?" said I. "Comment donc! est-ce que, par hasard, Monsieur ne sait pas ce que c'est que Gheel?" said he, with some surprise. "Mais c'est le pays des fous!" "Des fous!" answered I, "Est-ce donc qu'à Gheel il se trouve plus de fous qu'ailleurs?" "Mais certainement," replied he, "moi qui y suis allé, je peux bien vous dire que c'est effrayant à voir."

More and more surprised at what I heard, I begged an explanation of this strange story, which was altogether new to me, and learned that Gheel is an old and primitive town, in the most desolate part of the Campine, and that out of 8000 inhabitants, about 1000 are literally mad: in fact, that the town is one vast lunatic asylum. Scarce a house which does not receive boarders, in every stage of insanity; the management of them is as curious as the rest, no restraint whatever being imposed on them; they are left at large, and take their walks abroad, without even

the precaution of a keeper ; those who are likely to be violent or to fall into mischief, being merely chained at the feet. The prudence of this proceeding, however, is somewhat questionable ; it is not long since a Burgomaster was murdered by one of them. They are all paid for, of course, some by their relatives, others by their parish, and others by Government.

The principal church in Gheel is dedicated to St. Dympna, the patroness of lunatics. She is said to have been an Irish princess, who fled thither with a Christian priest, named Gereburnus, to escape from her father, who was opposed to her intention of devoting herself to celibacy. The altar is curious, and exhibits some elaborate stone and oak carvings, representing the legends of this saint's life. It has a *rétable*, and is surmounted by a rood. Many cures of insanity are said to have been performed at her shrine, and hence, doubtless, the origin of the present curious destination of the place.

This church likewise contains a monument to the memory of the Count and Countess de Mérode, of the date of 1550. Theirs is a very old Flemish family, and the present Count has estates all over Belgium, as well as in France. Besides this church, Gheel boasts those of St. Amand, St. Lambert, St. Laurent, Ste. Lucie, Ste. Elizabeth, and Nôtre Dame. It has also an hospital, under the care of sixteen *Hospitalières Augustines*.

Having no alternative now left, but to take up my quarters for the night at Herenthals, I retraced my steps towards the town, and as I walked, began turning over in my mind which of the two inns was likely to be the less objectionable. However, by the time I got back, I found the choice was no longer left to *my* decision ; a party of travellers had arrived in a quaint-looking *cariole* from Diest, and had already secured *all* the beds at the "Ville de Lierre," so I was obliged to make up my mind to the

"Saumon," and, entering the kitchen, desired a bed might be got ready, and that my *valise* might be taken from its resting-place, on the top of the diligence, into my room. This was more easily said than done, and the "*maritorne*," who was frying something very savoury over the stove, turned round with the old story, "Ik kan het niet verstaen," to signify that she did not know what I was talking about. Fortunately, a traveller who had just come in, and was waiting for his supper, understood French enough to act as interpreter, and through his intervention, I made out that *Monsieur* and *Madame* were gone out for a walk, and in their absence, she had no authority to let the rooms; indeed, she thought there were none vacant. Well, thought I, I have not even the luck of the "worst inn's worst room," and seem destined to pass the night *à la belle étoile*. It was a really beautiful evening, and I had already begun measuring the wooden bench outside the door with my stick, with a view to appropriating it, when happily mine host made his appearance, *Madame* following. I once more stated my demand, and, to my surprise, was shown into a clean, comfortable-looking room, with elegant muslin window-draperies, ,and a very satisfactory-looking bed, to which I was told sheets should be added immediately; almost suiting the action to the word, up came the heavy tramp of *sabots* on the oak staircase, and thinking I would inspect operations before going down to supper, I turned a scrutinizing glance at the linen. Its cleanliness was, strange to say, quite above suspicion, but something peculiar in the hanging of the folds induced me to pass my hand over it, when I found it as wet as if it had but just left the wash-tub.

"Ah ça!" said I, forgetting the damsel could not understand me, "que me donnez-vous donc là?"

"Ya ya," vociferated she, with the satisfied tone of a

person who has just succeeded in performing a difficult feat, "alles gaet wel; Ik koom die te overgieten."*

There was no questioning the veracity of this assertion, and as the word "airing" was a stretch quite beyond my vocabulary, I resigned myself to the only course left, viz., dispensing with them altogether; so, hurrying her out of the room, I abstracted them as quickly as possible, as the only chance of keeping the blankets dry!

I had no reason, however, to be dissatisfied with my *gîte*, for, despite the *carillon* which chimed the half-hours all night, in the middle of the *Grande Place*, just opposite my window, I slept till six next morning.

* "All right; I have just sprinkled them."

CHAP. XIV.

Thursday, Sept. 20th.—To Mass at half-past six, at the Church of Ste. Waltrude. Being Thursday, there was High Mass. The attendance was much larger than I should have expected, and, besides the peasantry, there were several well-dressed people. Another Mass was said at the altar at the extremity of the south aisle; the music was good, and the voices well-trained. The vestments were rich, and the candlesticks, thuribles, and other ornaments appeared quite equal to those seen in large towns.

I was as agreeably disappointed in the breakfast as in the bed which the "Saumon" afforded: all was clean and good, though rather restricted as to variety. The hostess apologised for the absence of butter, which, she said, was not to be got in the place; eggs were "*très rares,*" and meat was not attainable so late in the week, to-morrow being Friday; but, added she, "si Monsieur voulait se contenter d'un peu de fromage de Hollande?" of which she produced a minute portion under a glass case. I put her out of her misery, and restored her good-humour, by assuring her that, with such bread and coffee as she had provided, one was quite independent of accessories; and, in truth, I really think, notwithstanding the poverty-stricken appearance of the place, the bread was the purest I ever tasted, and might have rivalled that of Spain.

Having taken counsel with myself, and seeing no further reason for visiting Gheel, I asked my landlady to find a lad who would undertake to conduct me to Tongerloo, for

I had had enough of asking my way in a country of which I did not speak the language.

The "lad" soon arrived, in the shape of an old peasant *en blouse*, and off we started. The sky was cloudless, and of that clear, deep blue, one scarcely ever sees in England. Grasshoppers and bright-winged insects skipped about in the grass, as we walked now through a green meadow, now across the purple heath, or a wheat-field, sprinkled with the scarlet coclico. Our road sometimes lay through a thick brushwood, or an overgrown forest-path, and as we found it desirable occasionally to avoid the beaten track, and shorten our way by a less circuitous path, I began to see the prudence of having taken a guide, without whose assistance I should certainly have lost my way. As regards habitations, the *Campine* is quite a waste; the dwellings are very scattered, and those we passed were mostly empty cabins or mud-hovels, left in possession of pigs and children, while the owners were absent at their labour in the fields.

After an hour's brisk walking, we came to a little hamlet called Oolen, where my appearance seemed to excite no small amount of interest. I should imagine it must be but seldom a stranger of any kind, and, rarest of all, an Englishman, passes through this place.

In the centre of the village-green stands a very pretty church; and on entering it I was surprised to find it boasted an elaborately carved oak pulpit. The support was formed by a spirited group, representing St. Martin on horseback, dividing his cloak with the beggar, who crouches at his feet in an attitude of surprise and thankfulness. I suppose it is by accident, and not designedly, that the Saint is represented as retaining much the larger half for his own use.

On each of the columns of the nave was a figure of an Apostle, having under it a bracket candelabrum; on enquiry,

I found that even in this little "deserted village" Mass is celebrated twice daily.

A primitive draw-well, with a bucket and lever, occupied a prominent spot, and seemed to be the gossiping-place of the short-coated damsels who draw their daily supply from its depths. A little beyond was an enclosed court, on the door of which were painted, in large, rough letters, the words "*brand-spuit*," which I was at first disposed to interpret "brandy-spout," supposing it was the Dutch way of announcing a public-house; but a second reflection convinced me it bore a much less hurtful interpretation, and simply signified "fire-plug."

When we had left Oolen some way behind us, I began to wonder where in the world Tongerloo could be, and hazarded a question to my companion as to whether we were not near our journey's end. My French was quite at fault again, and I had recourse to signs, which only after a time seemed to penetrate his understanding; however, I fell back aghast when, instead of the "Het is veel verder," or "Gy zyt 'u nog ver af," with which he had responded to my last enquiry, he answered, with a mocking laugh, "Nog lang! ten minsten, veertig minuten wandelens," holding up his fingers at the same time, and counting, to shew me he was in earnest. Another hour of dusty road and broiling sun! for the hedges, when there were any, were low, and there was not an inch of shade.

So on and on he trudged with his stout oak stick, I following, and each of us raising a cloud of dust at every footfall, till we at last reached an interminable avenue of trees, as we entered which, he turned round, and dryly observing, "Alles gaet wel," informed me, Tongerloo would be at the end of that.

Like all avenues, it seemed to stretch out and grow longer, the further we penetrated into it, till at last, almost

to my surprise, we reached its termination, and then the vista, opening out, discovered a magnificent fortress-like old *château*, but protected by so high a wall, that the turrets of the monastery and the roof of the fine church in course of construction, were all I could discern. There it stood, in the heart of the Campine, braving all further attack, with its proud battlements, port-holes, and formidable moat. My imperturbable guide contented himself with turning round, and, without uncrossing his arms, which were swinging behind him, muttering, in a gruff voice, "Dit is de plaets, dat is Tongerloo," on he went. The spot was not so easy of access as it seemed. Like Dante and his not less intelligent *cicerone*,

"Venimmo al piè d' un nobile castello,
Sette volte cerchiato d' alte mura,
Difeso intorno d' un bel fiumicello."

but here the similarity of circumstances ceased, inasmuch as while he adds,

"Questo passammo come terra dura."

I am bound to confess, that like ordinary mortals, I was obliged to walk a considerable way along the bank of *my* moat until I came to a bridge.

Here was another turn, and then a noble avenue of sturdy old elms, forming a broad and lordly approach to the venerable castellated gateway.

A shepherd and his dog appeared, leading some three-score well-fed sheep; labourers dotted the fields in all directions; and whereas, since we left Herenthals, we had scarce caught sight of a human being, here all was bustle and activity: carts and horses and other evidences of agriculture were industriously engaged, and the voices of busy workmen and noise of tools were heard through the still air, as they toiled at the sacred edifice, which it is the pride

and pleasure of these monks to restore to all its pristine glory.

Arrived within the first gateway, we pulled a bell, when a deep, looming sound echoed through the vast quadrangle, and soon brought the porter to our summons.

He took my letter, and showed me into a very plain, bare, unpretending room. Here I had waited but a few moments, when the door opened, and the Rev. M. Franck appeared, dressed in the snow-white cloth habit of his order, with a stiff white linen cap.

He held out his hand, and ushered me with much kindness of manner into a room on the same floor, of fine proportions; and, though plain, not only exquisitely clean and neat, but even elegant in its simplicity.

After a little talk, he proposed shewing me the house and its dependencies, beginning with the chapel, which, though only temporary, is very handsome, and possesses some curious old pictures, besides a valuable ivory crucifix over the altar, of unusual size.

The new church is a costly building, and is intended to hold 3000 persons. Two of the Fathers were busily engaged in directing the works, which are as yet confined to the external structure, although they have been five years employed on it already.

It will be a superb edifice when finished. In the transept are two bays, facing eastwards and forming chapels. The altars are already constructed, their bases being brick. There are likewise altars at either extremity of the transept, but there are no choir-aisles, and no lady-chapel behind the altar.

There would seem to be a great scarcity of stone in the neighbourhood; brick is, therefore the chief material used, but the façade is of stone.

Hence we passed to the *Métairie*, likewise under the superintendence of one of the Brothers; but worked by farm-

servants. Five-and-twenty fat cows were ruminating in their stalls, and the dairy exhibited an abundance of rich milk, cheese and butter. The latter is manufactured by dogs, four of whom are kept for this purpose, and devote themselves solely to this occupation. They are put into a tread-wheel, which they must turn, *nolentes volentes*, and they do turn to some purpose, as they turn 100 quarts of cream into as many pounds of butter every week. Each of these canine dairymaids works an hour at a time, when, being released, another "takes up the wondrous *tale*."

This butter is all consumed on the premises, as there are a considerable number of mouths, and on three days of the week there is no meat eaten. Only one table is supplied from this monastery, that of one of the dignitaries of the Church at Brussels.

Besides this, there is a poultry-yard, and in a small paddock were a number of snow-white rabbits, kept no less for their flesh than for their fur, which is used by the monks in their dress.

After inspecting the kitchen and fruit-gardens, recreation-garden, and vineyard, we returned to the house, and I was taken into the guest-chambers, and along a corridor into a little oratory, beautifully decorated, which I was told belonged to the *Supérieur*, now absent: thence through the cloisters into the refectory and library, where the attentive guide took down a choice collection of rare illuminated MSS., real gems of early art, every one of which would repay hours of study and investigation. That of which the "*Frère Libraire*" seemed most proud, was a small but complete copy of the Holy Scriptures, written in the most minute, regular, and perfect hand —the words of course considerably contracted—which he told me had been the property of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Another—one of the most faultless and elaborate specimens in the world—was a missal, profusely illumi-

nated for Charles VI. of France. He produced also a volume of the earliest Venetian printing, with wonderfully beautiful illuminations *à la plume*, of the finest touch, and most brilliant colouring. These were the property of the former monks, and, with many of the rarer books, were saved and confided to a place of safety, where they remained concealed as long as the disturbances lasted. The remainder of the present collection has been brought together since the return of the fraternity.

I was almost afraid to open these old tomes, as they lay in tempting profusion around me, some in vellum, some in calf, and some in velvet bindings, with silver mountings; for I knew what irresistible fascination there would be in turning over the matchless pages of these wonderful productions. M. Franck, however, called me from my contemplations to examine a curious old folio, being a history of the monastery of Tongerloo, the frontispiece of which exhibited the place as it stood before the havoc made in it by the revolution. Vast as it now is in extent, the whole of the present building is but the portion of a wing of the original monastery. It must, indeed, have been a magnificent place, and as the order was one of those denominated *rich*, and a large tract of the surrounding Campine belonged to them, no doubt these *Seigneurs*, as the Brothers were then called, lived in lordly style, and exercised the duties of hospitality and charity with almost royal munificence.

My kind friend would not let me depart till he had reconducted me to the *parloir*, where a table was laid out with a cold collation, consisting of smoked *sanglier*, tartines of their pure home-baked bread, dried fruits, cakes, and a peculiarly lusci ous wine, perfectly colourless, but in taste very much resembling Constantia. As we sat at table, he entertained me with the history of the fortunes, or rather misfortunes, of their house, much as follows. It appears

that a short time previously to the bursting forth of republicanism, and the rule of anarchy, these Norbertine or Premonstratensian Monks, by some means, received a hint of what was about to happen. They lost no time, but hastily collecting every disposable article they possessed in the way of books, pictures, plate, &c., they sold them for the most they would fetch, and adding the sum to all they possessed in cash, deposited it with a wealthy Dutch merchant at Amsterdam. The Brothers then abandoned their magnificent domain, dispersed into various parts of the world, and for forty years were not heard of. At the end of that time, those of them who remained alive convened a meeting, and their *Supérieur*, though a very old man, being one of them, was commissioned by the rest to take his journey to Amsterdam, where he likewise found their Dutch *Dépositaire* still living. The *Mandataire* announced that he had returned to claim the sum deposited; and exhibited the merchant's promissory note in proof of the authenticity of the demand. The Dutchman's honour seems to have been of a high order; he acknowledged the trust, and expressed his readiness to restore the amount with its accumulated interest. The Fathers, however, would not be outdone in generosity, and only required of him the capital, remitting the rest to their faithful trustee, as the reward of his honesty. Provided with this fund, they repurchased a portion of their ancient territory, and again established themselves on the spot whence the ravages of civil war had so long exiled them; but instead of the baronial halls and impregnable towers they had left, they found little more than a desert waste. They did not lose heart at this sad spectacle, but resolving to make the best of it, put all that was left of the dwelling into tenantable repair, and determined before attempting to restore that, to concentrate all their efforts on the reconstruction of the church. When that is completed, they

may possibly make additions to the monastery itself, but they are now so much reduced in number, that its dimensions amply accommodate the fraternity, consisting of forty-two members. Not one of the original number remains, the last having died not very long since.

The servants and labourers employed by the monks are paid for their services; but, although hirelings, they are attached to those they serve, and mostly live and die within the monastery. They enter the service from choice, and are in no way bound.

As I before mentioned, when speaking of the Norbertine Nuns, this order refers to St. Norbert as its founder. The Saint was originally a Canon in the Duchy of Cleves, leading a somewhat secular, if not dissipated, life, when an unexpected dispensation turned his thoughts into a deeper channel, and finally completed his conversion: an interior voice seemed to urge him to change his course. Unable to silence the mysterious appeal, and at last being moved to follow its impulses, he turned all his energies to the expiation of his past errors, and the practice of devotion. The revulsion was so sudden, that he was charged with hypocrisy and love of singularity. The other Canons, for whom his conduct was a silent, but eloquent reproof, roused up so many difficulties and obstacles, that he abandoned his native country, and travelled through France and Italy, preaching penance as he went, and receiving the merited tribute of respect which had been refused him by his own countrymen. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? Bergier says of him, "Norbert n'employait ni les déclamations, ni les discours séditieux, ni la calomnie, ni la violence, comme ont fait les prétendus réformateurs du XVI^{ème} siècle. La douceur, la charité, les exhortations paternelles, le bon exemple, de ferventes prières pour implorer le secours de Dieu, la patience, furent les seules armes dont il se servait."

Barthélemy, Bishop of Laon, who had occasion, in a council held at Rheims, to admire the purity and simplicity of life, and the depth of eloquence, of this servant of God, entreated him to attempt the reform of his clergy, who had fallen into excessive laxity ; but the efforts of Norbert to bring them back proving unsuccessful, he retired in 1120, with a few disciples, who aspired to enter the way of perfection, into the Valley of Prémontré (*Pratum Monstratum*), situated in the Forest of Coucy, near Laon. In this spot it was, that by a life of complete mortification, they were to lay the foundation of the chief monastery of the order, which has since become highly celebrated.

These monks were at that time so poor, that they subsisted entirely on the produce of the wood, which they went every morning to cut in the forest, and which an ass —their only property —conveyed to the market at Laon, where it was sold.

St. Norbert gave to his monks the rule of St. Augustine, adding to it constitutions for the maintenance of discipline, and, in remembrance of his original condition, organised them into canons regular.

A forsaken chapel, which they found in the forest, served them for a church, and they celebrated Divine service there. The particular habit of the order was white, with a hat of the same colour, and a scapular worn over the cassock.

On account of this dress, the Premonstratensians were called in England "White Canons," or "White Friars."

The labours of this extraordinary man were most successful in France, and in less than a year his institution had taken so firm a root, that, deeming his presence no longer necessary, he returned into Germany, where his fame had spread with wonderful rapidity, and was in 1127 elected Archbishop of Magdeburg.

The poverty of his garb, no less than the unflinching

austerity of his life, sufficiently evinced the firm and uncompromising cast of his mind. The machinations of his enemies struck harmlessly as spent balls against his inflexible perseverance; and despite refusals, threats, and attempted assassinations, of which he was the object, he undertook, regardless of all opposition, the most stringent measures for the reform of his diocese.

As might be expected, he also set himself to transplant his order into his own country, and was rewarded by the happiest results.

He availed himself of the opportunity afforded him, when called into the Low Countries, to combat the heresy which had begun to spread there, to establish several houses, and, not content with this, left traces of his labours in Champagne, Burgundy, and a part of Germany.

All this was not attained, however, without its concomitant sufferings, and it was only after a long series of cruel vicissitudes, and a protracted captivity, that he attained the martyr's crown, departing hence to his reward in 1134.

Pope Honorius had confirmed, in 1126, the order of *Prémontré*, and it acquired great influence and popularity in France, more especially by the services it rendered against the Albigenses. The rigorous fasts, perpetual abstinence from meat, the inconvenient form and coarse material of the habit of these monks, and, in short, the severity of all their observances and practice, edified the faithful to so great a degree, that they were speedily endowed with wealth and privileges, and unhappily were thereby led to the very threshold of ruin.

In fact, so great was the relaxation which crept into the rule, as their opulence and the secular nobility of their members increased, that after the larger number had been swept away by those revolutions which accompanied the spread of heresy in England, Scotland, and Ireland,

Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, two reforms took up the remainder, and declared themselves independent of such houses as remained of the original but deteriorated order.

St. Norbert also established an order of women, of whom the number is said to have reached 10,000 in his lifetime; and, at the period of the schism of Luther, there were no fewer than 500 convents of female *Prémontrées.*

Helyot states that, in his time, there was not one such house remaining in France.

The legendary version of the origin of the order of the *Prémontrés* is not a little curious. Early in the twelfth century it appears that a large lion, the most ferocious of his tribe ever known, held his lair in a wild, rocky solitude between Laon and Soissons, whence he periodically issued to satiate his voracity not only on the flocks of the peasantry in his neighbourhood, but frequently, by way of *bonne bouchée,* on their children. Wholly unable to defend themselves against the attacks of this rapacious monster, the unfortunate victims at length bethought themselves of proceeding in a body to the residence of the gallant Enguerrand de Coucy, lord of the territory, setting forth their miseries, loudly and with tears lamenting their hard fate, and beseeching him to become their champion against their hitherto invincible enemy. The appeal was no sooner heard than answered. He required of them nothing more than a guide to the stronghold of the ferocious depredator. On arriving at the field of action, the guide shrunk back in terror, crying out, "Le voilà!" and made his escape at full speed. "Que Dieu m'aide!" shouted Enguerrand. "Voilà vraiment un lion, mais tu me l'a prèsmontré." With that, he forthwith commenced the assault, and after a terrible but brief encounter, transpierced with his sword his redoutable adversary, and thus

effectually freed the district from its terrors. Returning home, the body of the lion borne triumphantly before him, the peasants assembled around his castle with fervent expressions of gratitude, and all his vassals renewed their vows of fidelity. St. Norbert having heard of this noble feat from the Bishop of Laon, presented himself before Enguerrand to congratulate him, and also to set before him a project he had long contemplated of founding a monastery in that part of the country. Enguerrand, as earnest in a religious as he had proved himself to be in a warlike cause, at once put himself in communication, and suggested that the monastery in question should be erected on the hitherto barren and deserted spot where the celebrated combat had taken place. St. Norbert, on being then consulted, gladly accepted this generous offer of assistance in carrying out his long-cherished scheme, and as a perpetual memorial of the honour due to Enguerrand, determined that the Abbey should be named "Prémontré," the final word he had used before ridding the country of its great pest.

An earnest and impressive discourse, delivered by St. Norbert at Laon, at once engaged forty of his hearers in the great work he contemplated; and the generous Enguerrand, having largely endowed the Abbey with money and lands, this devoted band set to their work with an energy which in half a year had drained the marshes, cleared a sufficient space in the forest, and constructed a dwelling for the brethren, whose beneficent influence was quickly felt far and wide. The resources of the fraternity were all devoted to works of charity, their own maintenance being provided by a kitchen-garden, which they cultivated with their own hands. The date of this first monastery of the order of Prémontré is 1130. Its fame was soon so extensively spread, that many persons of eminence desired to become members, and enabled the brethren, by liberal donations, greatly to enlarge the monastery. Applications

also came in from all quarters to St. Norbert for his advice and assistance in establishing confraternities. To these he warmly responded, and, before the end of the twelfth century, affiliated societies had started up in all parts of Europe.

The time had passed so rapidly, while listening with interest to the conversation of my agreeable and intelligent host, that I almost forgot the eight miles' walk I had before me, and began to think I must forego the visit I had intended to the Curé of Westerloo, and to the Château of the Comte de Mérode, which I had nevertheless been told was well worth seeing.

It is a fine relic of the fifteenth century, being of about the same date as that of Chenonçeau, and in an equally perfect state of preservation. It is habitually occupied by the present Count and his family, though they are just now absent in the Pyrenees.

A little to the east of the monastery lies the village of Tongerloo. A fine new church is in course of construction there.

Before starting, I was invited to join the Brothers at vespers in the chapel. The organ was well played by one of their number, and the voices of those who formed the choir were excellent and carefully trained. As soon as this was over, I was once more on my way, and got back to Herenthals, without accident or adventure, before seven, having preferred the walk, to the kind and pressing offer M. Franck had made me of either a riding-horse or a carriage.

Everbodé, I was told, was much such another convent as Tongerloo, but the situation is even yet more wild. It has a commanding aspect, and is very difficult of access: it was — perhaps on this account — less damaged by the revolutionists. The monks are of the same order,

thirty-five in number, and appear to have a great deal of intercommunication, frequently visiting each other.

Having nothing further to detain me at Herenthals, I took leave of mine host of the "Saumon" and by half-past nine reached Malines.

CHAP. XV.

Friday, Sept. 21st.—To early Mass at the Cathedral, which rather disappoints one internally. There is a nakedness and want of that detail about it, which the rich and elaborate character of the exterior leads one to expect, and the liberality with which some cleanly churchwarden has whitewashed every corner, contributes to mar the general effect. It is very light, and there is a great scarcity of painted glass; though a few scattered panes of modern execution have found their way into three windows of the apse, and one of the north transept; but they are disconnected and out of place.

It is just now undergoing repairs, and the chancel was encumbered with workmen and tools.

The Blessed Sacrament was not on the high altar, but in a rich tabernacle of the eighteenth century taste, in the second chapel of the north aisle.

Together with an air of departed magnificence, Malines has a deserted appearance, almost unaccountable, when one considers it as the great root from which branch off all the Belgian railways. I have always observed there are fewer English here than in any other Belgian town; and those travellers who do alight, are generally priests, of whom a great number seem to be perpetually going backwards and forwards between this and other places.

The *Carillon* here is remarkably pleasing in tone, and the tunes are much more "made out" than usual, though I do not know whether the *moth-eaten* character which usually stamps them with the signs of tottering old age,

investing them, as it were, with a venerable antiquarian *ærugo*, does not suit better with their time-honoured existence to which it eloquently, but unobtrusively, draws attention.

At eleven o'clock, there was a grand funeral at the Church of Nôtre Dame, famous for "the Miraculous Draught," by Rubens, and for little else. The pall and vestments were of black velvet, with large crosses of gold watered lama, and there was a considerable amount of pomp and ceremony about the whole affair. The *assistans* were numerous, but none of them seemed much affected by their loss. During the *Credo*, all the men, who filled one side of the nave, rose and walked towards the coffin, which stood in the nave in front of the high altar. At the south-east corner stood two priests, the first of whom gave them each a lighted taper, which they held for a minute, and then handed to the other priest, and, as there were many, this occupied a considerable time. When the service was over, and the coffin had been placed in the hearse, half-a-dozen coaches drew up, each receiving four of the *assistans*. All displayed coronets on their panels, but were of somewhat antiquated appearance, both in form and condition; and as the footmen who stood behind them wore *blouses* and *sabots*, and the harness was composed of pieces of knotted rope, the whole procession presented a most motley appearance.

The deceased had been a retired pastrycook, so that all the pomp, coronets inclusive, must have been hired.

To Salut at five at the Cathedral, where there was a tolerably full attendance; mixed, but the poorer class predominating. While the service proceeded, the workmen engaged on the chancel-roof continued their operations; one of their number, employed in the chancel itself, though he did not suspend his labours, seemed particularly careful not to make any unnecessary noise.

One circumstance which surprised me was, that although the Blessed Sacrament was in the tabernacle I alluded to before, and Benediction was given from the altar in that chapel, all the congregation knelt towards the high altar.

To the *Sœurs Hospitalières de Ste. Elizabeth*, close to *Nôtre Dame*, a very ancient order, dating from the eleventh century, having been founded by St. Elizabeth of Portugal. Despite changes and revolutions, this house has been in their occupation ever since this affiliation was placed here; but, owing to the insufficiency of their space to accommodate as many inmates as they might receive, they are about removing into a new and handsome building preparing for them in another part of the town. The Sisters are twenty-two in number, all Flemish, and they now receive 100 patients, "*indigens de la ville.*"

There are four servants to assist in the work, but, as in every one of these hospitals, the duties and offices personal to the patients, are performed by the nuns. The Sister who received me undertakes the *pharmacie*, which not only supplies the inmates, but dispenses medicines gratuitously to all the poor who apply. She had been twenty-nine years in the house.

I asked whether she did not find this work affect her health; she admitted that, at the beginning, she had had a very severe illness, but since that time had never experienced a single day's indisposition. She had attended cholera-patients, on five different occasions; but neither she nor any of the Sisters had taken the complaint. Scarce a day passes that there is not one death in the wards, and sometimes, when there is any epidemic prevailing, as many as ten, and even twenty. For the last two months they have had unusually few deaths, although there have been several cases of typhus. There are two physicians and two surgeons, who are paid by the *Administration des Hospices*, also a resident chaplain. Mass is said daily in

the chapel, which, like most of those in hospitals, opens into the sick-ward. This is constructed similarly to the other old Belgian hospitals, with a fine open oak roof, and, like them, is more picturesque than healthy.

During the revolution, the pious labours of these devoted women not only continued uninterrupted, but, in addition to their ordinary hospital-work, they were charged with the care of the wounded.

They shewed me a large, handsome dining-hall, of very antique aspect, furnished with old carved oak *boiserie;* the fireplace and sculptured stone mantlepiece quite in the early style. Over this is an old painting, representing Our Lady and Infant Saviour, before whom kneel on either side St. Elizabeth, their patroness, and St. Augustine, whose rule they follow; opposite hangs a very good "Descent from the Cross," by Vandyke, of the value of which they do not seem at all conscious.

Their habit is white cloth, with a white cap pinned up; over this they wear a large blue chequed apron and sleeves. A wooden crucifix is suspended on the breast.

To the Church of St. Pierre, a cinquecento building of not very attractive appearance, adjoining which stands an old convent-like edifice, of much more promising exterior. Feeling curious as to the destination of the latter, I asked at a baker's shop opposite, and was much surprised to hear it was the *Theatre!* "Oui, c'est assez drôle," said the *master of the rolls*, on my alluding to its proximity to the church, "l'église d'un côté, la salle de spectacle de l'autre! However, the Belgians are by no means such a play-going people as the French; there are few Flemish theatres. This one is open only in the winter, and then the performances are in French; so that they are evidently for the benefit of the upper classes. There is a *Béguinage* here, of forty-seven Sisters; but it is so like those described in other places, that it need not be more particularly mentioned.

Saturday, Sept. 22nd.—To seven o'clock Mass at the Church of St. Jean. It has an untidy appearance, but possesses some valuable pictures,—all covered up—and some good wood-carving. Mass was at the north transept altar; attendance small and poor. After Mass, a relic was offered for the osculation of the faithful; a boy followed with a plate, but only two cents were collected! Outside the church, on a sort of platform of rockwork, railed off, is a representation of Our Lord's agony. The figures are carved in wood, and not calculated to excite the reverence or sympathies of the beholder.

There are in Malines only two houses of contemplative orders, viz., one of ten *Carmelite* Nuns, and one of thirty *Clarisses Colettines.*

Besides these, there is a house of thirty *Sœurs Apostolines*, for the gratuitous education of day-scholars.

Of thirty *Dames de Marie*, for the same object, being the *Maison Mère.*

Of twenty *Sœurs Maricoles;* likewise an *externat* of thirty *Sœurs de la Charité Chrétienne*, for sick and lying-in patients, with a school for poor children; and, finally, an institution of thirty-three *Sœurs Noires*, for nursing patients at their own homes.

The religious houses served by men, are only two in number; that of

The *Alexiens*, or *Frères Cellites*, who are only ten here, and whose *œuvres* are the care of the insane, attendance on the sick at their own houses, and burial of the dead, especially in times of pestilence; and that of the *Frères de Nôtre Dame de la Miséricorde*, of which this is the *Maison Mère.*

M. le Chanoine Scheffers is their founder. They have existed twenty-five years, and are now about 100 in number. Besides five houses they have in Belgium, namely, at Malines, Vilvorde, Gand, Alost and St. Hubert, they have one of a reformatory character, at Hammersmith

under the direction of Dr. Manning. The objects with which the order was instituted, are the service of the sick and prisoners, the care of incurables, and the education and reformation of poor boys.

In this house there are about thirty-five Brothers, and the pensionnat receives 250 children.

They wear a black dress, with the white linen *rabbat*, and a small black skull-cap, only differing from that of the *Frères des Ecoles*, inasmuch as a cross of brown cloth is sewn on the breast. The establishment here is large, and, with the ground, occupies a considerable space. It seemed to be conducted in all respects like the houses of the *Frères des Ecoles*, except that it embraces more objects.

CHAP. XVI.

Called on M. le Chanoine Van Erven, to whom I had an introduction, and fortunately found him just returned from the country. I was very glad to have met him; and must have thought his conversation sufficiently agreeable and interesting, seeing that I found, to my surprise, I had been nearly four hours discussing points of doctrine with him, and even then only got away with difficulty.

He entertained me, during a great part of the time, with accounts of many conversions, in which he had been instrumental, some of a striking character. One was that of an Englishman in the military service,—I think he said a Colonel,—who began by being very sceptical, and came to Malines for the express purpose of notifying to M. Van Erven the mortification and displeasure he felt at his having received two of his near relatives into the Church; however, strange to say, it was not long before he was so nearly convinced of the truth of their faith himself, that nothing remained to stagger him but the supernatural accounts he had heard of the *adolorata* and the *estatica*. M. Van Erven told him that his belief in the authenticity of the statements which had been made respecting them, was by no means an article of faith; and that, even were he a Catholic, he was in no way bound to believe in them.

"Then," replied the Colonel, glad to catch at a flaw in the "Romish system," "you admit that your Church also allows of "open questions?"

"Certainly," was the reply; "but mark this vital dif-

ference, NEVER in DOCTRINE. The Church is responsible for matters of *faith*, but not for matters of *fact*."

This the Colonel declared to be a subterfuge, and expressed his reluctance to belong to a Church which did not forbid the publication as facts, of all that it did not authorize. M. Van Erven answered, that he had no doubt in his own mind that they *were* facts; and he thought the colonel ought to be very sure they were not, before he either denied them, or suffered them to prevent him from taking a step, which, irrespective of them, he would feel was his only safe course. He, however, added, he had no wish to force the thing, though, of course, he was most anxious for his full conviction; he therefore advised him to visit the spot, and judge for himself. "No, no," said the Colonel, "visitors are constantly expected, and besides, how do I know that they may not be warned of my coming?" "Well then," rejoined the Chanoine, "go without telling any one, even myself, of your intention, and go at a time of year when visitors are never expected." The colonel gave no answer, but took this advice, and made the journey in the depth of winter, when no traveller was likely to venture across the snow and ice: unlike Cæsar, he went, he saw, and *was* vanquished. He returned to his kind and persevering friend, fully convinced, and the very next day was "received" by him at Antwerp. Indeed, so entirely was he satisfied, that he felt the deepest compunction for having entertained the doubts which had disturbed him, and, desirous of repairing the insult he considered he had offered to the Church, resolved at once to sell his commission and become a priest. The good *Chanoine*, fearing, perhaps, lest the generous impulse might be the result of impetuosity of character, and might afterwards produce a reaction, strongly dissuaded him from this hasty measure, and with difficulty obtained from him a promise to wait three years, at the end of which time,

he undertook that if he continued still of the same mind, there should be no further opposition to his wish.

The three years of probation passed away, but not so the resolution of the young man; he returned, if possible, more determined than ever, and became not only a priest but a Jesuit.

M. Van Erven shewed me a collection of clever and artistic water-colour sketches, framed, and suspended round his room, which he said had been executed by this remarkable convert, who gave them to him.

M. Van Erven had been in England, spoke English well, and knew many of my countrymen. One great regret he expressed was, that he had not, when there, met with that gifted and distinguished man, the Rev. Dr. Manning, — of whom he said the Church in England might well be proud,— he being in Italy at the time.

With the English prayer-book, catechism, articles, &c., he seemed quite familiar, was aware of all the distinctions of "high," "low," "dry," and "broad," and even knew one of the bishops by his "slippery" *sobriquet*.

Westminster Abbey he had seen, but declared it could no longer be considered a church, since it was taken possession of by the Protestants, who had converted it into a receptacle for the ashes of those who scoffed at Christianity in every form, and had therefore no title to be looked upon otherwise than as heathens.

He made, as I thought, a very fair remark upon a difficulty in reasoning with Protestants, which, he said, he had invariably experienced, viz., that they never seemed to understand that their own individual opinion was not that of their Church: *e. g.*, in discussing the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with an Englishman, not long since, the latter interrupted him with the assurance that he held the doctrine firmly, and therefore that

he was justified in remaining a Protestant. "But," said M. Van Erven, "the question is not what *you* believe, but what your *Church* teaches." "If that is all," said the Englishman, "my Church does teach the doctrine as I hold it; witness Mr. Gresley's tract upon the subject." "That circumstance does not bring us any nearer the point," answered M. Van Erven, "very likely the minister you name, holds baptismal regeneration in its most Catholic sense, but still it is only the opinion of one individual minister, not the teaching of the Church. However, let us put it more strongly, and suppose that to-morrow morning every Anglican minister should wake up fully convinced of the truth of that doctrine; you would still only have so many individual opinions, and it would not be a doctrine of the Church even then.

"The Anglican Church has *no* defined notion upon that point, any more than upon so many other vital doctrines, and the very fact, now notorious to all the world, that it was determined to be an '*open question*,' sufficiently shows how difficult, if not impossible, it is, for an Anglican even to know what, if he is to be consistent, he is expected to believe.

"Only consider the effect which this state of things must have upon those who are disposed to scoff at Christianity altogether."

"The condition of Protestants in these respects," said I, "indeed offers a most powerful engine against religion; it is frightful to think of the responsibility of those whose notorious disagreements are thus instrumental in suggesting and fostering infidelity. There can be no doubt but that, as say the Spaniards,—

"'Cuando la Iglesia arde, el diablo rie.'"

I was, on the whole, much pleased with my visit; and

regretted that my short stay would prevent me from seeing more of my earnest-minded friend.

In this diocese are four houses of *Sœurs Annonciades*, viz., at Bereken, Itterbeck, Tirelemont, and Welthem, the latter being the *Maison Mère.*

This is an ancient and somewhat peculiar order, and I mention it here, because, although founded at Bourges by La Bienheureuse Jeanne de France,—daughter to Louis XI., and Charlotte de Savoie,—the first and divorced wife of Louis XII., it was entirely extinguished in France at the first revolution, and now exists only in Belgium.

The history of their royal foundress is especially interesting, from the almost supernatural way in which circumstances, apparently adverse, enabled her to carry out the hopes and vows of her youthful days—thwarted, in the first instance, by the despotic policy of her father — and to enter into the full practice of that life of piety, the vocation for which had manifested itself in her earliest childhood.

Cherishing in secret, an inspiration she had received, that she should one day withdraw herself from the world, and consecrate her life to God, her forced marriage with her cousin of Orleans seemed to give the death-blow to all her hopes: but how often have we not occasion to be humbled by our own unfounded apprehensions, and to admire the inscrutable ways of God! Her husband's consent to their union had been given with as much reluctance as her own, and no sooner was her father removed by death, than Louis, having nothing more to hope or to fear by an open declaration of his sentiments, summarily repudiated her, yielding to her as appanage, the city of Bourges. Hither she retired, rejoicing instead of repining, in the public humiliation thrown upon her by the king's injurious and unmerited treatment; and here it was that, after a time, she succeeded in founding a congregation of women in honour of the "Annunciation of the Glorious Virgin

Mary." In her projects she was materially assisted by her director, Father Gilbert Nicolaï, and the institution was finally confirmed by Pope Alexander in 1501.

The rule which she drew up for their observance consisted of ten chapters, corresponding with the ten virtues of the Blessed Virgin, *i. e.*, her chastity, prudence, humility, faith, devotion, obedience, poverty, patience, piety, and compassion.

She began with ten young girls, of whom the original community was formed; and, having established them in a retired house, gave them a Superior; and so regulated their day, that every hour was employed, whether in meditation, reading, needlework, or in the choir. Their life was very austere; and so great was their zeal, that it was necessary to moderate the ardour with which they gave themselves to mortification and humiliations of every kind.

The princess, moreover, appointed them a habit, every portion of which should remind them continually of the sanctity of their obligations. It consisted of a black veil, in token of devotion; a white cloak, symbolical of purity; a scarlet scapular, in memory of the Passion of Our Lord; a brown dress, as a sign of penitence; a sky-blue ribbon, from which hung a silver medal, which invited them to raise their thoughts to their heavenly inheritance; a cord, on which were tied ten knots, formed their girdle, and recalled the ten virtues of Mary. Finally, a ring was given them at the time of their profession, as a mark of the fidelity they owed to Jesus Christ, their Spouse.

Besides the four houses named above, in the diocese of Malines, there are two more in that of Bruges, viz., one at Furnes, and another at Reninghe, being all that remain of this order; they have no connexion with the An-

nonciades of Italy, founded in 1604, by Marie-Fornaro of Genoa, whose habit, down to the shoes, was white and sky-blue.

These have spread into France and Germany ; but they have no affiliations in Flanders.

I left Malines this afternoon, for Brussels, where, —owing to the fêtes which, to my annoyance, I found were at their height,—I had much difficulty in obtaining accommodation. However, after trying six hotels, all of which were full, I put up at " La Poste," near the *Bourse.*

I walked out at dusk, and wandered up the Rue de la Madeleine and Montagne de la Cour, to the Place Royale, and found it a strange, busy sight. Stir, and movement, and bustle there was, and to spare — " much ado about nothing," thought I.

In France, when there is a public fête, the matter makes noise enough, doubtless ; but there it really is carried out on so profuse and magnificent a scale, that even a phlegmatic Englishman might think it worth while to put his head out of window, and cast a dignified, if not envious, glance on the grand doings. Here it is such utterly poverty-stricken and contemptible child's play, that one wonders how even the little folks, much less those who have arrived at years of discretion, can derive the minutest quantity of pleasure or excitement from it.

The old city looked gay, with all its shops open, and lighted up. The air, mild and still as a summer evening, rang with cheerful voices, and sometimes with the merry laughter of the numberless groups of every class who had been flocking in all day.

As I passed the Jesuit Church, in the Rue de la Madeleine, I saw a full congregation pouring out.

Sunday, Sept. 23rd.— To seven o'clock Mass at St. Nicholas, which was very crowded ; the holiday-folk filling

streets, squares, churches, and, indeed, every available spot.

After breakfast, to Ste. Gudule, which of course was equally full. I never saw this fine church to so great disadvantage. The richly-wrought and gilt iron screen, which divided the chancel from the nave, has been removed, and the whole interior was decorated in very poor taste, with funereal trappings for the anniversary Mass to-morrow.

It was further disfigured by a gigantic and very unsightly *catafalque*, inscribed "*à la mémoire des braves, morts pour la cause nationale*," for whose souls a solemn commemorative Mass is to be said to-morrow morning. The *Requiem* is to be that composed by M. Fétis, directeur du Conservatoire, for her late Majesty.

Many military insignia were mingled with the symbols of woe, and the black draperies were somewhat relieved by their silver borders, fringes, and powderings of silver tears.

Though there are evidently many English visitors in Brussels just now, the company at the *table d'hôte* were all either Belgian or Dutch. It was a long, tedious business, and I left it, *in medias res*, to accompany an Anglican clergyman, who called for me, to vespers at Ste. Gudule.

The music seemed to me inferior to that of former days in power and execution, though in character equally florid and unecclesiastical. I must except the *Salve Regina*, which was exquisitely sung, and that to one of the most simple, pathetic, and expressive melodies with which I ever heard it united. "Ad te suspiramus, ad te clamamus, gementes et flentes in hac lachrymarum valle," was rendered with so much feeling and fidelity, that I am sure any one present who did not know the words, could not have failed to feel their import.

The evening hymn, also, was touchingly given : I might almost say of it, with Dante,—

"'*Te lucis ante*,' si devotamente
Le usci di bocca, e con si dolci note
Che fece me a me uscir di mente."

The exterior of the Cathedral is undergoing very complete repair and restoration ; and all who admire this fine mass of masonry, will rejoice to hear that the elaborate stone-work which enriches it, is no longer disfigured and concealed by the *guinguettes*, low shops, and other architectural abominations which once tantalised the baffled eye of the spectator.

At the conclusion of Benediction, a party of about a dozen persons entered with an infant to be baptized. None but those belonging to it were allowed to witness the ceremony, which was performed, not in the baptistery, but in a small chapel out of the north aisle ; so that it might be called a *private* "public baptism."

The theatres were, "more Lutetiorum," thrown open to the public to-night; and numerous Fêtes Champêtres, and other public amusements, were provided for the gratification of the mobocracy.

At Ixelles, a large balloon was sent up, and rural and national sports followed this feat. At the Allée des Hiboux, was to be a theatrical performance, followed by a ball, to commence at ten o'clock.

One of the play-bills I saw, announced, among other pieces, "*Les Trois Pêchés du Diable*," and another, after "*Robert le Diable*," a piece called "*Les Sept Pêchés Capitaux*."

As I returned, about twelve o'clock, from my friend's house, where I had spent the evening, I found the streets, usually so still at this hour, quite alive with men, women, and children, returning from their pleasure-parties ; all some what the worse for their day's work — or rather, play.

CHAP. XVII.

Monday, Sept. 24th.—Up soon after six, and to the Cathedral. Mass was in the south aisle chapel, and ill-attended. Several persons entered, to examine the tomb of the late Comte de Mérode, shot during the revolution, and apparently quite a young man. Doubtless his patriotism and devotion to the cause in which he died has made him popular.

The monument, though the work of Geefs, and highly commended by Roscoe, disappointed me: I thought it by no means tasteful or attractive. The Count is represented in his dying moments; and his last act, that of firing a pistol, is commemorated in the attitude of the figure, but the *pose* is not easy, the countenance wanting in expression, the drapery ungraceful, and the *tout ensemble* redolent of a Westminster Abbey sarcophagus.

After breakfast, I returned to the *Grande Messe des Morts*, which was fixed for ten o'clock. The King, of course, was not present, neither, for some cause, was the Duc de Brabant; the Comte de Flandres, however, arrived with his suite in two carriages, with scarlet liveries, and an escort of guards, and occupied a crimson velvet throne, erected to the north of the high altar, and quite within the sanctuary. The building was densely crowded, and a considerable muster of military was present.

A file of soldiers lined each side of the nave, and surrounded the huge *catafalque;* and, within the spaces thus formed, were seated their officers, each with a black crape

band on his left arm. At the Sanctus, as in all military Masses, the effect was very impressive. After the procession of acolyths, bearing lighted tapers, had formed themselves behind the officiating and assisting priests, at the first stroke of the bell, the soldiers, with one accord, shouldered their pieces, the muffled drums rolled solemnly for several minutes, and all devoutly fell on their knees, while clouds of incense filled the sanctuary.

As soon as the service was over, the royal party took their departure by the north door, and the crowd slowly dispersed.

To the Musée, where, though the arrangements by which visitors make their "exits and their entrances" have undergone some alteration, not a picture seems to have been moved since I last saw the gallery, fourteen years ago. To-day, as it was thrown open to the holiday-folks, it was, of course, densely crowded; but all were particularly well-behaved, and seemed to be really enjoying the sight.

To call on M. le Chanoine Donnet, Curé of St. Jacques, with a letter of introduction from a friend at Bruges, an English convert, for whom the Chanoine evidently entertains great regard. He was exceedingly amiable and polite, speaks English with great ease, and is intimate with many of my countrymen, both in England and abroad. He seems to know every one in Brussels, and has considerable influence here.

My principal object in addressing myself to him, besides the pleasure of making his acquaintance, was to obtain some further insight into the workhouse system in Belgium, and I was very glad to find he could furnish me with a letter, among others, which would procure my admission into the important parochial institution of La Cambre, beyond Ixelles, perhaps the best specimen one can see. It is one of the four *Dépôts de Mendicité* which Belgium possesses; and, being distant only about three miles, I

started off at once, on taking leave of the Chanoine. It is a very pretty walk, and the country is much more undulating than usual, besides being diversified with wood and water. At Ixelles I found an ancient house, with land, bequeathed by a certain M. Vanna, in the year 1481, to the perpetual maintenance of twenty-five poor old men, above sixty years of age, eligible for good conduct.

They are lodged, clothed, boarded, and nursed in illness, and each has his little room, neatly furnished.

They have three meals a day, and meat every day, except, of course, on Friday. A common kitchen and refectory serves them all, and a prettily laid-out garden, in very trim order, supplied with benches and tables, makes a pleasant change for them. A tidy, bustling woman, with an assisting drudge, waits upon them, cooks, and does all they require; and on my asking if there were not a "*Supérieure*," she answered, with something like offended dignity, "C'est *moi* qui suis la Supérieure." It is not under religious rule; and these two females compose the *personnel* of the establishment.

The inmates are perfectly free to go in and out, and may receive their friends every day.

There is no chapel or chaplain attached to the house; but the Curé du Village visits them constantly; and they all attend Mass, almost daily, in the little parish church close by.

La Cambre is about a mile beyond this, standing alone in the midst of the extensive lands which once belonged to it, and a portion only of which it still retains. Before the revolution it was a noble domain, belonging to the *Rich Clares;* but at that fatal period, it underwent the demolition which swept away so many of these peaceful abodes. The building was partially destroyed, and the

lands confiscated; the nuns were of course dispersed, and are now all dead.

After a time, by Napoleon's command, the house was restored into something more like order, and served as a military hospital for the wounded at Waterloo.

Subsequently to this, it was appropriated to its present purpose, being made capable of accommodating 5000 persons besides officials.

There are seldom so many, unless there is great scarcity of provisions and of work; but the number of inmates often amounts to 3000. There are, at this moment, 1275, of whom the greater proportion are men. All the arrangements appear admirable, and are necessarily on a large scale.

The two departments are each perfect in themselves; and the buildings which compose them are so extensive as to give the idea of a small town.

The men have their *ateliers*, dormitories, refectory, infirmary, kitchen, bakehouse, *lingerie*, gardens, and courts; and their boys' school, — all these being repeated on the other side, with this difference, that the *buanderie*, or laundry, with its drying, mangling-rooms, &c., on the women's side, corresponds with the kitchen and bakehouse on the men's. The former do all the washing, and the latter all the cooking. They have no farm, and their supplies are contracted for. They burn coal from Mons, and find it far cheaper than wood.

They consume 2000 lbs. of potatoes daily; have meat three times a week, and on the remaining days porridge made of rice or oatmeal, and *bouillon*.

The allowance for the midday meal is manufactured the evening before, and is then poured into stout oaken tubs, where it stands till required, and in such large quantities that, in the atmosphere of the kitchen, it remains sufficiently warm.

I saw about twelve or fourteen of these huge receptacles standing neatly arranged, in two rows, down either side of the kitchen, sending forth savoury steams.

When this is disposed of, preparations are made for supper. For breakfast they are allowed coffee and bread.

Married couples are separated, as in England, and only see each other for one hour on Sundays. There is an infants' ward, in which the mothers are allowed to remain with them. Three *Sœurs de Nôtre Dame de Namur* have charge of the girls' school—a very satisfactory department, of which the pretty little oratory forms an encouraging and significant part.

The inmates are received for various terms—three, six, nine, and sometimes even twelve months—and during that time are paid for, by the parish to which they belong. On entering, their clothes are taken off, and exchanged for those of the house;—they are washed, mended (if possible), and folded safely away, to be returned to them whenever they leave.

They are forced to work, and punished for idleness; but they are entitled to so much per day, in proportion to their diligence, the utmost they can earn, however, being limited to fifteen sous. This money is not paid to them at the time, but is deposited in a *caisse d'épargne*, where it bears interest, with which it is given to them when they go out. The work they do, and the articles they manufacture, are eagerly bought up by the shopkeepers in the town, who pay for them about one-third less than manufacturers' prices.

Some of these paupers are excellent workmen, and remain steadily at their occupation for weeks, and even months together, while under the wholesome restraints of the house; but, the moment they are released, many yield to their propensity for drink, and are soon reduced to a state of starvation and misery, which brings them back destitute to their old quarters.

A cheap kind of carpet is made here in large quantities; and as it undergoes three different processes, its manufacture occupies a considerable number of hands. The first card the wool, or rather hair, for it is composed of cow's and goat's hair mixed; the next spin it into thread; and the third weave the material, which is made of two widths, and is used very much in prisons, schools, and convents, for carpeting both rooms and stairs. A coarse canvas, of which large quantities are produced, goes through much the same preparation. Besides these, they are tailors, shoe-makers, carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, basket-makers, rope-mat-makers, &c. Among the women a similar organisation is maintained. These are stocking-knitters, lace-makers, seamstresses, &c. A number of them are always employed in mending, and the washing occupies many. As I passed through the laundry, I observed they were repeating *Paters* and *Aves* while washing, one taking the lead, and the rest following. This custom, the overseer told me, had been suggested to them by the chaplain—for obvious reasons—and it had a remarkably good effect, having been at once adopted, without a dissentient voice.

One department, in which everything seemed very comfortably arranged, has been devoted, on either side, to the aged and incurable of both sexes. They have gardens separated from the rest of the inmates; and appeared to be enjoying their ease and tranquillity. Several of these who have been handicraftsmen, employ their otherwise weary hours in making little ingenious toys, which they sell, to procure a few additional comforts.

The chapel is large, and is decorated entirely by the inmates. It stands open at all times, and many among the old and infirm resort thither for prayer and meditation before the altar. All are invited to attend Mass daily, and not a few avail themselves of the privilege. On Sun-

days and festivals, their attendance is obligatory, and the men and women are divided. The sermon is alternately in Flemish and French. There is also a *catéchisme* and *instruction;* and the chaplain spares no pains in preparing those who have not received their first communion.

He visits them frequently, taking much interest in them, and has brought numbers to confession. He lives in a separate house on the premises, and devotes his whole time to his duties here, receiving a stipend from the Administration des Hospices. I was sorry that, being engaged today, I did not see him.

Walked back to Brussels, dining at a little primitive roadside inn. Out with my Rev. English friend in the evening; the town being frantic about the illumination, which, however, proved to be a most pitiful attempt, and scarcely so brilliant as the ordinary "lighting-up" of a Parisian or Londonian thoroughfare.

However, the Bruxellois seemed perfectly satisfied, although the "great gun" of the evening—the illumination of the tower of the Hôtel de Ville by electric light — most decidedly hung fire, and refused to exhibit anything beyond a few fitful glimmerings, which altogether departed at about nine o'clock.

The King and Princess Charlotte, and the Duke and Duchess of Brabant, drove round the park and principal streets during the evening, to the great delight of the *iacquerie.*

Tuesday, Sept. 25th.—Having a letter for M. Dupectiaux, Inspecteur Général des Prisons, I went to his residence, after breakfast, to try to obtain an order for the *Maison de Détention,* at Vilvorde. He has a very elegant house in the Rue des Arts, just outside the Porte de Louvain. Unfortunately, he had gone out, but his servant told me I might possibly find him at the *Ministère de Justice.* Here also I was disappointed; so thought it

best to show my letter to the sub-inspector, who, having read it and identified me by my passport—for it is no easy matter here to get inside a prison without a *valid reason* —gave me an order on his own responsibility.

As I passed the palace, I saw one of the royal carriages, an open barouche, standing in the *porte-cochère*, by which the family usually make their *sortie*, and learnt that it was waiting for the young Dukes of Brabant and Flanders.

I remembered having seen these Princes some years back, when accompanying their father, King Leopold, to open the session of parliament, riding on either side of his Majesty, on two ponies; their long, fair hair flowing over their shoulders in graceful curls, and their infant countenances beaming with that pure and almost angelic expression which they must have inherited from their late saintly mother, and I could not but feel interested in seeing them once again, now that the Duke of Brabant has become the idol of his future people.

Well indeed may they be proud of a Prince, so eminently distinguished for his virtues and his deep sentiments of piety. Where, in these degenerate days, shall we find a youth in any rank of life, much less in one so exalted, who, emulating the devotion of a holier age, has consecrated to God the first-fruits of his wedded life, in the performance of a pious pilgrimage; stealing, as it were, from the vanity and frivolity in which that period of a man's career is usually squandered, an opportunity for good; and although surrounded by all those accessories of youth, health, wealth and rank, which were but so many additional temptations to worldliness, offering himself and his bride by this special act to the service of his Divine Lord? Surely a union on which, at its earliest dawn, the blessing of heaven was thus invoked, promises well, no less for his political than his domestic happiness.

I had not waited long before they drove past, eliciting the cheers of the passers-by, as they pursued their way.

Both are fine young men, well-made and gentlemanly, and they courteously acknowledged the recognition of the people. The carriage and liveries were plain, as were also those of the King, who passed shortly after in a close coach and pair.

Took the train to Vilvorde, walking through the little town, beyond which the prison stands about half a mile.

It is a large, massive building, formidably strong, with two moats round it, and as many determined-looking gates and bridges. It was once a Convent of Premonstratensians, but has also been used as a state-prison, and was, at a still earlier period, the residence of Jacqueline of Bavaria: it has been appropriated to its present purposes ever since the accession of the reigning king.

In 1841 it underwent great improvements, having been enlarged, and reserved exclusively for male prisoners; indeed, no female is ever allowed to enter the precincts, even to visit it. The women have now a separate prison at Louvain, where they are under the care of *Sœurs de la Providence*, an order founded by M. Quinet, about forty years since. The number of inmates usually averages 100, and their dress is singular; its greatest peculiarity consisting in a starched linen cap, with border of so great a depth, that when sitting or walking side by side, as they sometimes must, they are entirely precluded from speaking to, or even seeing each other without detection. They are employed in various ways for the service of the house, as also in *ateliers;* and the general organisation is similar to that adopted here.

At the prison of Vilvorde, there have been, since 1845, twelve *Frères de Nôtre Dame de la Miséricorde* of M. Chanoine Scheffers' foundation.

The house is capable of receiving 800 prisoners; there

are now here 763, and twenty-six in the infirmary; all sent for various terms, from six months to twenty years. Many of these have returned frequently for short terms, and one has passed thirty years of his life in prison! When the punishment is for life, they are not sent here, but to the *Travaux Forcés* at Ghent.

Besides the jailers, there are between thirty and forty soldiers always on guard; there are two *aumôniers*, and the chapel regulations are similar to those at the *Dépôt de Mendicité*. At both institutions there is a small oratory, to which they have access at all times.

When breakfast is announced, the chaplain precedes the prisoners into the refectory, where grace must be said before a mouthful is touched. They have three meals a day—at which they consume 1 lb. of bread each—and are allowed meat four times a week, at the rate of one kilometre for ten persons. They rise at half-past four, breakfast at half-past five, dine at twelve, sup at four, and retire at eight.

The chaplain reads to them every evening for an hour, and all under thirty years of age attend the *Catéchisme* and classes of instruction. Silence is continually observed, except during recreation, which is two and a half hours daily.

They all work, *bon gré*, *mal gré*, in the *ateliers*, and gain thirty to fifty *centimes* per day. Half of this they may spend in bettering their food, and the rest is laid up for them against their liberation. On Sundays they attend High Mass, followed by a French sermon, then comes recreation, succeeded by an "*instruction*" from the chaplain. Dinner, classes, recreation, vespers, and a Flemish sermon, salut, supper, and bed.

They manufacture, among other articles, their own *sabots*, of which they wear out three pairs a year.

The bread they eat is of coarse brown flour, and is made on the premises for this, and the other prisons,

to which it is sent. This establishment is so extensive, that it took me nearly two hours to visit the various departments and ascertain the particulars I have set down.

There is a curious old *Carmelite* Convent at Vilvorde, which I took on my way. A Sister came to the *grille*, but spoke through her veil; and, as she understood but a few words of French, I could not elicit much information from her, though she seemed willing to be communicative. She told me there were twenty-four Sisters, and that they were Carmelites of the strict observance, following the rule of St. Teresa. Their chapel is open to the public, but the nuns assist at Mass behind a *grille* near the altar.

Over the door is the inscription in Flemish, "*Nood Zoekt troost*," which signifies "Our Lady of Consolation," and alludes to a figure of the Blessed Virgin which adorns this church.

This was one of four which belonged to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and which, at the death of that saint, were bequeathed to her daughter Sophia. That Princess having married the Duke of Brabant, brought them with her into Belgium. One she deposited here, and the remaining three were placed respectively at Haarlem, Gravesande, and Halle. A small farm belongs to this convent, and they keep about half-a-dozen cows.

Vilvorde is a straggling little town, consisting almost entirely of one long, winding street, at the extremity of which, is the *Hospice Civil*, served by eighteen *Hospitalières de St. Augustin*.

There is a fine old church here, boasting in its stalls as admirable and elaborate a piece of carving as any in Belgium; even when viewed at a distance, this imaginative composition is fascinating in its bewilderment, while a closer inspection renders its mysterious and inextricable entwinements a marvel of richness, delicacy, and artistic beauty.

The spectator envies the glowing and boundless fancy which must have revelled unrestrained in the labyrinthine but harmonious intricacies of the luxuriant design, and stands amazed at the grace and finish of the execution, the variety and minuteness of each object introduced, and the bold originality of the whole conception.

Its history adds to the interest with which its details cannot fail to be examined, and as the legend has not found its way into any "handbook," I will mention it here.*

The work bears date 1663, but unhappily the name of the artist has been lost, and he is only known to fame as " the carpenter of Rosendael."

This same Rosendael was, before the French revolution, an extensive convent of *Sœurs Noires*, occupying the centre of a small village called Waelhem, near Mechlin. The care of the sick was of course the special *œuvre* of the order, but their hospitality was extended to all who sought it, no matter who, or under what plea.

One evening, a poor traveller knocked at the convent gate, and on being beckoned within its precincts, was found not only exhausted by fatigue and want, but also labouring under a violent fever.

For nearly two months did he remain their guest, during which time his life hung on a thread; but the tender care of his unwearied nurses, and their earnest prayers for his recovery, triumphed over the disease, and he began slowly to regain his strength. His whole thoughts were now turned to one object, viz., how he should prove his gratitude to his benefactresses. A most unlooked-for opportunity soon occurred; before he was quite recovered, a heartless robbery was committed in the

* This story is very prettily told in an interesting little volume, recently published by Lambert, called "Tales and Legends."

convent, and, among others of their goods, the nuns were despoiled of a box containing a sum collected during many years, for the decoration of their church.

Great was their distress at finding their long-cherished hope thus suddenly snatched away, when so near its accomplishment.

The stranger shared their disappointment, but he was calm and reflective amid the general consternation. He asked to speak to the Superioress, and with a look full of confidence, which she seemed at first disposed to deride, assured her that, with God's blessing, he would repair their loss.

The only conditions he asked, were a sum of thirty crowns to purchase tools and materials, a shed where he could labour alone and uninspected, food and clothing during the time, and five years to accomplish the task. The 1st March, 1663, exactly five years after the event, the stranger opened his shed, and called on the Superioress and nuns to come and behold his work. Their astonishment and delight were beyond all expression. They looked upon the result as something superhuman. No fee or reward would the generous and mysterious artist accept, he would not even give them his name, but the stalls being fixed in the place they were destined to occupy, he took his farewell and was never again heard of.

At the revolution, Rosendael was suppressed and dismantled, and all its belongings sold and dispersed. The parish authorities of Vilvorde purchased for a mere trifle the grateful tribute of the carpenter of Rosendael, which was placed in the church, and forms an object well worthy the attention of those who appreciate ecclesiological curiosities.

On leaving the town, the scenery assumes a pleasing, undulating, and more richly wooded aspect than I have as yet observed. I walked on for nearly an hour and a half

before I arrived at Grimberghen, where there is a patched-up convent of sixteen *Prémontrés*, who, like those of Tongerloo, returned here after the troublous times, but in so small a proportion to their original number, that the *débris* of their once flourishing monastery were sufficiently extensive to receive them. The Superior received me in the parlour, a somewhat secular-looking room, hung round with full-length portraits of some of the more distinguished members of their order. He was very kind and pressing in his offers of hospitality, and recounted to me the particulars of their dispersion and return to their original abode, much resembling those of the generality of religious bodies.

They have now been here about twenty years; and of the former Brothers, about 100 in number, only one survives, and he resides in Brussels. The church is a striking building externally, and the interior is rich and costly, but mixed in architectural detail and decorations; it is cruciform, but of the pseudo-classic style, with a spacious dome in the centre, beyond which is the sacrarium, corresponding with, and nearly as long as, the nave. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved at the north transept altar, dedicated to Our Lady of Seven Dolours. It boasts some fine, but modern, carved oak stalls and misereres, as well as a carved pulpit, commemorative of the defence of the Church by St. Augustine against Pelagius. Saint Norbert is introduced into the group, and a series of pictures illustrative of the life of this Saint adorns the church.

The sacristy is a spacious and exceedingly handsome room, or rather hall; the walls are formed of carved oak panelling, into which are introduced paintings, representing legends of the life of Saint Norbert; and the floor is inlaid with white, grey, and black marbles. At the eastern extremity, a crimson velvet dais canopies a chair of state,

which is occasionally used. There is a valuable library belonging to these Brothers; the farm and dependencies have been abandoned, but they have a recreation-garden, besides another abounding with vegetable supplies, and walled fruit.

The Abbey stands in the midst of the village, and, though picturesque in appearance, has none of that castellated character which distinguishes Tongerloo and Everbodé.

Le Comte de Mérode has an ancient *Château* near here, I therefore went a little out of my way to see it. It stands in the midst of a large tract of land, all of which, except a piece of forest, that surrounds the house, is actively cultivated. The pleasure-grounds are wild and deserted; the gardens, orchards, and shrubberies a perfect wilderness, the *parterres* overgrown with rank weeds, the fountains dry and moss-grown, the moat choked with ferns and long grass, and the bridges and terraces, with their characteristic grey stone ballustrades, covered with patches of yellow fungus.

Almost unconsciously, Byron's graphic and eloquent lament over the desolation of his paternal domain, starts to one's lips:

"Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle,
Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once smiling gardens the hemlock and thistle
Have choked up the rose which late bloomed in the way."

All this appearance of neglect prepares one for the dilapidated aspect of the quaint old *Château*, which stands as a venerable and yet grotesque relic of a past age. It is like nothing one has seen in real life, and seems to have walked out of an old Flemish picture. As the eye wanders over the countless pepper-box turrets, capped with red, mossy tiles, and thence over the mass of building, its

irregular angles, meaningless projections, and unaccountable recesses, blank walls, and unsymmetrical windows, filled with the smallest possible *carreaux*, one wonders how it ever entered into the minds of men of any age or nation to construct a piece of architecture so utterly at variance with all the laws of harmony and good taste.

The front of the house displays a quadrangular lawn, encumbered with a great variety of crockery, pans, coops and kettles, baskets, barrows and tools; surrounded on three sides by the building, but open on the fourth. It is approached by a ballustraded, grey stone, bridge, which I had no sooner crossed, than two formidable dogs flew savagely out of their kennels, and bayed at me for some time with considerable vigour. This alarm soon brought a peasant-woman to the entrance-door, carrying one child in her arms, and followed by half-a-dozen more, together with a voluminous litter of youthful puppies, and half the inhabitants of the *basse-cour*, none of whom, I suppose, had ever beheld an Englishman before.

The door, which hung crazily by one hinge, admitted me into a lofty, antique hall, which doubtless once was magnificent. Various rooms opened out of this, through one of which I passed and threaded a vast suite of hollow, empty, rooms,—dingy, damp, and dusty; but still hung with an interminable gallery of ghostlike family-pictures, ending in a little chapel, evidently once richly decorated, but now, like the rest, dismantled and disfigured.

The vaulted staircase, canopied by a painted dome, had been in character with the rest, and now shared its deserted and abandoned lot. It is about sixty years since it has been occupied, and is certainly, just now, a most spectral habitation.

Its owner is a wealthy *propriétaire* and possesses fifteen *Châteaux*, not *en Espagne*, but in Belgium. The Count

de Villermont has a large estate near, which he frequently visits. They are both exceedingly charitable.

Being too late for the train, I was obliged to dine at Vilvorde, where, to my surprise, the little inn being small, I was very well served, and moderately charged.

CHAP. XVIII.

Wednesday, Sept. 26th.—To the Deaf and Dumb Institute, Place de la Reine, Schaerbeck, where, being vacation time, there was not much to see. It is under twelve *Frères de la Charité* of M. Chanoine Triest's foundation at Ghent. The Supérieur, a very conversible man, had been in England two years, and spoke English a little. The institution, called that of St. Louis, combines with the above-named charity a pensionnat and demi-pensionnat, for boys of from six to sixteen years, who pay, but the sums are moderate. The boarders are received at 400 francs *per annum*—16*l.*—and the *branches de l'enseignement* are as follow:—"Doctrine Chrétienne, Lecture, Déclamation, Calligraphie, les langues Française et Flamande, l'Arithmétique, la Géométrie, la Tenue des Livres, avec tout ce qui regarde le Commerce, l'Histoire, la Géographie, et l'Histoire Naturelle."

The day-boarders pay 15 francs per quarter for the elementary, and 20 francs for the upper class, with an addition of 5 francs per quarter for firing in winter, and 50 francs per quarter for board, including breakfast and dinner (about *3s.* per week).

The *Sœurs de la Charité* have a corresponding institution in the Rampart des Moines, and, besides day-scholars, also receive boarders. There are twenty Sisters. Both have an *externat gratuit* for poor children.

To the *Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes*, Rue N. D. aux Neiges, an affiliation of the French order, founded by L'Abbé de la Salle. Though they have only been established in Belgium twenty-four years, there are already about

300 Brothers here, out of 8000, the whole number. In Brussels there are two houses, one of twenty Brothers, and this, where there are fourteen. In the latter, 900 persons, consisting of day-scholars and adult artizans, who attend the evening classes, obtain a gratuitous education. Both receive instruction in religion, besides being taught reading, writing, cyphering, book-keeping, linear drawing with perspective and music: that in fact, is the object, as it is the basis, of all social education; and, the *Frère* remarked, "Sans cela, ce serait inutile pour nous de nous en mêler; il se trouve assez de maîtres, quand il ne s'agit que de l'instruction."

He said the effects of their labours were most satisfactory, that they had now a fair opportunity of judging, since they had seen two generations grow up under them; and the best proof of their success was, that the children they had educated, now fathers of families, brought their own little sons to receive the advantages they themselves had learned to value.

He had been Supérieur for some years in France, before he came here. Some, he said, were very difficult to teach; but, though the Belgian children were much less quick of apprehension than the French, he preferred instructing them, as they retained far better what they did learn. I told him I thought it must require immense patience and self-devotion.

"Ah, Monsieur!" he answered, "s'il n'y avait que ce monde-ci, jamais, jamais je ne pourrais y suffire . . . . .; mais . . . pour l'amour de Dieu, et pour gagner le ciel, c'est encore —hélas! — si peu."

He spoke of Brussels as a very disadvantageous place for education, called it "une ville de plaisirs," full of corruption, and calculated to produce and foster vice in the young. He remarked on the universal propensity all Belgian boys had for becoming soldiers; and, of town and

country children, he considered the former as decidedly the more vicious; but thought the others were preserved in a more simple state by their heaviness and stupidity. I remember once asking the same question of a brother-clergyman in England, who had had a cure in London as well as in rural districts and whose experience was to the effect that "both were *equally* vicious, but that it was a different *kind* of wickedness."

He said the holidays were a great help to them, and the repose they afforded was quite a matter of necessity. He took me through the class-rooms, which seem well arranged, and well ventilated; that used for drawing is supplied with excellent elementary models.

He told me that six or seven years since, when his Eminence Cardinal Wiseman visited the Archbishop of Malines, there was a meeting here of the principal members of the fraternity, at which the question of education was discussed. The Archbishop complained he was disappointed in the social condition of the country, which did not seem to keep pace with the efforts made by the educational and other orders.

The Cardinal, who, as one of the most distinguished literary characters in Europe, is a perfect linguist, addressed the meeting in his usual graceful and eloquent style, although in French; and in the course of a very effective speech, bade them not be discouraged by appearances, which, to all but their own zealous and ardent minds, were far from unpromising: then, evoking from his well-stored memory an illustration exactly to the point, his Eminence related an incident in the life of St. Catherine of Siéna, which, he said, had always impressed him much.

One day, while in retreat, meditating on the corruption of our fallen nature, this Saint was favoured with a vision of Our Lord, who appeared before her, holding in

His hand an apple, apparently withered and decayed, which He bade her consider.

Having contemplated the object thus presented to her, the saint perceived that the rottenness of the fruit was external, and did not penetrate to the core: upon which Our Lord desired her to look upon the germs of faith and holiness which might even now be found in the world, as still remaining pure and uncontaminated, like the seeds of this apple, though surrounded with evil and danger, and still competent, therefore — if carefully planted and tended — to bear good and acceptable fruit.

This, his Eminence applied to the present condition of society, which if, to outward appearance, working wickedness, yet contained within it, hidden capabilities of better things, ready to be sought out and brought to light, to the ultimate glory of God.

Then, carrying on the analogy, he declared his opinion that these Brothers were engaged in the very work recommended by Our Lord to St. Catherine, and assured them of God's blessing on their efforts to foster and refine the rising generation, on whom it depended to regenerate their country.

This address seemed to have made a vivid impression on all present; and the *Frère* assured me, though it had taken place so long ago, the Cardinal's visit has never been forgotten: he added, he thought he could repeat every word of his Eminence's speech.

I was not surprised at this, neither would any one be, who has enjoyed the high intellectual gratification of hearing the Cardinal lecture: — the remembrance is much too pleasing to escape the recollection of his audience.

Many characteristic anecdotes of this distinguished prelate have gained circulation in Belgium, where his marvellously varied and profound mental powers, literary achievements, sterling worth and warm heart, forming a

combination as rare as it is admirable, have gained universal esteem.

Instances of considerate kindness towards others, in all ranks of life, conferred in the simplest and most winning manner, were detailed to me as of ordinary occurrence. These must necessarily result from the overflowings of a generous and affectionate nature, scarcely to be looked for in one whose rank, influence, intellectual pursuits, and general devotedness to duties, might justly be expected to overwhelm the more tender and expansive impulses of the heart.

With the other religious orders, these *Frères* underwent a complete *bouleversement* at the time of the revolution in France; but no sooner was tranquillity restored to the public mind, than the want of them began to be felt.

Napoleon I., who saw matters could not go on thus, called one day his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, whom he had raised to the Archiepiscopate, and consulted him on the subject.

"Ah! Sire," replied the Archbishop, "le fait est, que nous ne pourrons jamais nous passer des *Frères;* depuis leur dispersion, il n'y a plus de religion—plus d'éducation —plus de principes—parmi le peuple." "Et que faut-il donc faire?" urged the emperor. "Mais, il me semble que votre Majesté n'a qu'à les rappeler; pour cela, il ne faut qu'un trait de plume." Napoleon adopted the suggestion; the *Frères* were recalled, and, under the auspices of the good Cardinal, were soon reorganised, and at their work again.

They have reason to speak well of the Napoleon family, who have always befriended the order, and appreciated their services. Napoleon's mother, it seems, was a very excellent woman, and used to say that, being sure the prosperity of her family could not last, she was resolved to do what good she could while she had the means. She therefore occupied a great proportion of her time and money in chari-

table works, and further bequeathed to the *Frères* the house in which Napoleon was born, and which, as she had always refused to leave it, had been enlarged for her occupation; this house they possess to the present day, and carry on their *œuvre* there.

Louis Philippe, destitute of the policy which had moved his predecessor to desire the assistance of the *Frères*, tyrannised over them with great cruelty and injustice, and, by his behaviour in the *affaire de Toulouse*, consummated his persecutions.

In Belgium, immediately on the expulsion of the Dutch government, the *Frères* were invited to set up houses in all the dioceses; and though they began in a small way, only establishing themselves by twos and threes, they soon spread all over the country, fixing their *Maison Mère* for Belgium at Namur.*

They are not recognised by the government however, notwithstanding the manifest advantage they must be to the country, and, receiving no support from this source, are entirely dependent on private charity. One of their benefactors, M. le Comte de Villermont, assists them largely. Indeed, he is one of the rare instances we encounter of real charity in a wealthy man. The sums he gives away are munificent, but are always distributed with the most studious secrecy and precaution, literally following out the precept of concealing from his left hand the gifts bestowed by his right.

* They have at present in the different dioceses 27 houses, the number of Brothers in each, as follows:—

Malines.	Gand.	Liége.	Namur.	Tournay.
4 Boon.	6 Alost.	26 Liége.	5 Bastogne.	5 Ath.
20 Brussels.	18. Gand	19 Verviers.	4 Cinay.	5 Binche.
14 ,,			5 Dinant.	4 Charleroy.
2. Nivelles.			5 Florenne.	4 Trameries.
			4 Gembloux.	10 Mons.
			24 Malonne.	6 Peruveley.
			71 Namur	4 Sivry.
			M. M.	4 Soignies.
			9 Paliseul.	10 Tournay.
			4 Rochefort.	

The Comte de Mérode, besides aiding them himself, obtained from the late Queen a subscription of 2000 francs per annum, which, since her death, the King has continued to pay.

The *Supérieur* conducted me to the chapel, which is quite a gem. The interior is a mass of gilding and rich illumination. The borders and styles are gorgeously elaborate, and the centres of the panels thus formed, are filled up with subjects on a pure gold background. The whole was painted gratuitously by a great artist here, M. Portaels, son-in-law to M. Navez, President of the Academy. Indeed, the entire plan of the decorations was entrusted to M. Portaels, who proposed to produce in it a perfect model of an oriental church, and he has succeeded admirably. He has contrived an exquisite little chapel in the south wall, with an altar-tomb: the sanctuary and high altar are very costly. It is lighted by oil-lamps suspended in opaque, egg-shaped, white globes of eastern character, terminating in a long, scarlet silk tassel.

It is lighted up only on great occasions, as the *éclairage* for one service costs forty francs. Of course they have a chaplain.

To the *Petites Sœurs des Pauvres*, the sole house of this order in Belgium. They have been established here only since last April; and though when they first arrived, they made the good Bruxellois stare at the strangeness of their appeal, which was not in the least understood, they are now well known and well received, and never return from the *quête* empty-handed. They have a little cart, drawn by a donkey, as at Paris, wherein they make their biurnal perambulations. There are eight Sisters, all *Brétonnes*, like their foundress, six of whom appear quite young, and the one who conducted me over the house was remarkably pretty. They have accommodation for seventy

vieillards, men and women; but the house is not very well adapted for their purpose. It seems, however, to be part of their vocation to labour under disadvantages, and to make the best of everything.

They have certainly succeeded with admirable ingenuity in contriving their dormitories, refectory, kitchen, *lingerie*, *pharmacie*, and little chapel. In the latter, Mass is said twice a week only; as, even for this, they are dependent on charity, having no "chaplain" of their own. They attend Mass at the parish church on other days. When my conductress opened the chapel-door, I found the other Sisters were saying their midday office, in Latin. They wore their outdoor dress, as, indeed, I have always remarked in the choir.

There was only one old woman in the infirmary, and one aged man, who, they said, was childish; another of the inmates was sitting by, to watch him. The foundress of the order is now at the *Maison Mère* at Rennes, where she has taken the name of *Mère de la Sainte Conception*. There are about 100 Sisters there. On all the doors I observed a little paper label pasted, on which was written "Sainte Marie, conçue sans pêché, priez pour nous."

Through the Petit Sablon, to the *Sœurs de Nôtre Dame de Namur*, Rue de l'Etoile. These are twenty-one in number, and hold a *demi-pensionnat*, for children of the upper class, who pay; a gratuitous *externat* for poor children; and an *école dentellière* for *ouvrières*, similar in principle to those I have before described. They have at present only a small provisional chapel, but are building a larger. In one of the class-rooms, inside a cupboard-door, containing books, slates, &c., hung a mass of rosaries. These are distributed to the children, as they go in to service, by one of the monitors, whose business it is to collect them again, and restore them to their place.

In returning, passed the college, which was formerly, I

remember, an *Hospice des Vieillards ;* over the centre may still be traced the words, "*Egenis Senibus,*" which proclaimed its original destination.

Besides the houses I have seen in Brussels, there are — of men — one of twenty *Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne;* one of ten *Joséphites,* both educational ; one of twenty-six *Jesuit Fathers,* for the *service des paroisses,* combined with a *Collége d'Humanités ;* two of *Redemptorist Fathers,* a missionary order described elsewhere, fourteen and twenty in number respectively ; and a convent of twelve *Capuchin* Monks.

Of women, there is one, of fifty *Sœurs Noires,* mentioned before ; of thirty-six *Hospitalières St. Augustin ;* of forty *Chanoinesses de St. Augustin,* who employ themselves in the education of girls of both classes ; of eleven *Dames de Marie,* for the instruction of poor children ; of twenty *Sœurs des Ecoles Chrétiennes ;* of ten *Sœurs de Charité de St. Vincent de Paul ;* of twelve *Sœurs Hospitalières ;* of twenty *Hospitalières Augustines de Ste. Elizabeth ;* of twenty *Carmélites,* and of eighteen *Clarisses.*

As I passed the *Temple des Augustins,* on my return, I found a considerable crowd assembled, a file of life-guards being drawn up opposite the entrance. Two or three of the royal carriages were driving about, and a few minutes after, were ordered up to the door. The first was a plain chariot and four, preceded by outriders, who, as well as the postillions, wore undress liveries ; into this the King, who now appeared from within the building, mounted, being warmly greeted by the people.

The second carriage then drew up ; it was an open barouche and four, with outriders, all the servants wearing scarlet liveries. This was occupied by the young Duke and Duchess of Brabant, the Princess Charlotte, and the Count of Flanders. The royal suite followed in two more

carriages. They had been attending the distribution of prizes of the Humane Society, his Majesty presiding. One little fellow, of eight years old, who had rescued a young companion from drowning in the canal, walked away decorated with a medal, and was loudly cheered by the crowd.

CHAP. XIX.

LEFT Brussels this evening by the seven o'clock train for Mons, which I reached at nine. On my way from the station to the "Singe d'Or"—a very favourite dedication, by the bye, of hotels in Belgium—I found this little town was also undergoing the periodical excitement of the "*fêtes.*"

The venerable old *Grande Place* was illuminated, after primitive fashion, with torches; and in the centre was a temporary orchestra, on a square raised *estrade*, performing a succession of overtures, quadrilles, waltzes, &c., which the people seemed to enjoy greatly, as, under the starlit sky, "so boundless in magnificence and might," they sauntered about in groups, "all unupbraided by this radiant choir," whose brilliancy did not attract one upward gaze, while the wretched coloured lamps, as they hung in half-extinguished, moth-eaten festoons, elicited marked admiration and applause!

I thought of Virgil's "Nox erat," &c. and of Tasso's matchless outburst at the sight which glittered overhead: but what poet has it not inspired?—

"Era la notte, e' l suo stellato velo
Chiaro spiegava, e senza nube alcuna,
E già spargea rai luminosi, e gelo
Di vive perle la sorgente Luna."

Xavier Le Maistre's quaint observation seemed extremely apt on this occasion. "Quelle bizarrerie!" he re-

marks, "parcequ'on peut le voir souvent, et gratis, ils n'en veulent pas: si le firmament était toujours voilé pour nous, si le spectacle qu'il nous offre dépendait d'un entrepreneur, les premières loges sur les toîts seraient hors de prix, et les dames de Turin s'arracheraient ma lucarne."

Something of this idea must have passed through the mind of Anacreon, when, after describing the "midnight glory of the skies," he adds, with simplicity,—

Μερόπων δὲ φῦλα πάντα
Κέαται, κοπῳ δαμεντα.

I had never been at Mons before, and, as I walked about the old streets by this same moonlight, I was much impressed with its architectural beauties, which told to great advantage under the strong contrast between bright, suggestive points, and deep, mysterious shadows.

It stands on uneven ground, whence, I conclude, its name, and many of the streets are steep and winding.

Thursday, Sept. 29th.—To High Mass at the Church of Ste. Elizabeth. The south aisle altar was that used. The music and voices above average.

After breakfast, to M. Gravez, doyen de Ste. Elizabeth, with a letter, but found his house empty; he, gone to Paris, and his sister absent: I was directed next door, to M. Décamps, who received me with much politeness, and very kindly furnished me with letters to several institutions worth visiting.

Of them there are only three houses here. One of the *Frères des Ecoles*, the second a *Jesuit College*, and the third that of the Redemptorist Fathers, who have just completed a very beautiful church. It is middle-pointed, and rich in gilding and decoration. Over the transept altars are two exquisitely carved groups in oak. That on the north represents St. Joseph standing under a palm-tree, at the foot of which is seated Our Blessed

Lady, with the Infant Saviour on her knees. Beneath was this legend, "Joseph vir Mariæ, ex Quâ natus est Christus."

That on the south was the figure of a bishop in pontificals, healing the sick, and below were the words "Ex illo iebat virtus, quæ omnes morbos sanebat. S. Luc, chap. v. ii. 17."

In the south aisle was a table — something between a bracket and an altar — on which, amid a multitude of flowers and candles, stood a plaster cast of the miracle of *La Salette*, painted and gilt. Near it was a printed notice addressed to those who were desirous of joining the *confrérie* of La Salette.

When speaking afterwards of the chapel to one of the Brothers, he seemed very desirous I should understand that this was *not* an *altar*. I had seen, a day or two since, an article in the "Observateur Belge," charging the Redemptorists with making a great deal too much of this miracle.

Back to the *table-d'hôte* dinner at one. According to the ancient custom which is still observed in some of the less sophisticated localities, the host and hostess presided, the former sitting at the right side of the table, and the latter at the head. The host, however, carved, and the *garçons* were women. All at table were Belgians, several being military officers. They talked of the games which had taken place yesterday in honour of the *fêtes*, and rather a warm dispute arose as to whether Binche or Braine-le-Comte — between which two important cities there had been a contest of games—had won the victory! "Et certamen erat, Corydon cum Thyrside, magnum."

They next came upon the discipline in the army, which they described as very severe: "punctilious" would have been more the word. One of them told a story of a brother officer, who, suffering from gout, and finding it

a matter of impossibility to draw on his military boots, ventured on duty in easy shoes; for which offence his superior officer gave him "*dix jours de prison.*"

Another took this up, and said *he* remembered being on duty one day, when the Duc de Brabant reviewed the troops, on which occasion the same officer, being late, hurried on parade, with one glove not fully drawn on. This breach of etiquette was immediately observed, and was expiated by fifteen days' imprisonment. "Et pourtant," continued the narrator, "il a le Général La Faix pour beaufrère, et on peut dire qu'il est très bien vu dans son régiment."

To the *Ursuline* Convent—a new red-brick building—for the education of about sixty gentlemen's daughters, with an *externat* for 150 poor children, under thirty-four Sisters.

The *Sœur Tourière* came to the *grille*, and, when I had requested admission, passed a key through one of the openings, and bade me let myself into the *parloir*. I accordingly unlocked the door indicated, and found myself in a large, light, well-furnished, carpeted room, divided across the middle with a *grille*, consisting only of bars, and bronzed. Almost as soon as I entered, the *Mère Supérieure* appeared, and, at my request, detailed to me the objects of the house, as stated above; and, from what she said, I concluded the education here given to the pupils must be of the most comprehensive nature, although 20*l.* a year covers all expenses.

I asked her some particulars about their order, but could only elicit that they claim to be the "*Vraies Filles de Ste. Ursule.*" However, this did not enlighten me much, as there are no fewer than twelve different *Congrégations* which go by the name of St. Ursula.

They have a handsome chapel, into which, although open to the public, men are not allowed to enter; therefore,

although the bell was ringing for vespers, I was obliged to turn back from the door.

Near this, stands a convent of the *Sacré Cœur*, altogether similar in its intention to, and an affiliation of, that at Paris, under the same dedication.

A grand castellated building, erected on the highest ground in the town, at the summit of one of its steepest streets, with a colossal gateway, and formidable walls, was pointed out to me as the "*Château des Fous.*" It is destitute of religious surveillance, being in fact a private speculation. It accommodates 150 patients, mostly persons in good circumstances; though there are poor received also, and paid for by their respective parishes. They have good medical advice, spacious apartments, and fine grounds.

To the Church of Ste. Waudru, or Waltrude, which they *call* the Cathedral. I was told that a quasi military funeral, *i.e.*, that of a *cantinière*, had just been celebrated here. This is a grand fifteenth century building, though it gives one the idea of being of earlier date, the columns being destitute of capitals. The roof is of immense pitch, and there remains in the windows, especially those of the clere story, some fine old painted glass, which casts a rich glow over the interior.

The roof of the nave and aisles is bare brick, groined with stone copings; the rest of the building is of stone. It has a fine apse, and the bold flying-buttresses, which support and adorn the exterior, almost remind one of Amiens. There are fifteen bays round the chancel, opening into as many chapels, nine in each aisle; the triforium is rich, with stone columns.

To the *Frères des Ecoles*, whose house here, of ten Brothers, receives 600 poor children. It was very similar to others described before.

Friday, Sept. 28th.—To early Mass at Ste. Waudru. A grand mortuary Mass was being sung at the high altar,

with orchestral accompaniments and much pomp. Another, more simple, was said at an altar in the south aisle, apparently an anniversary Mass; about twenty persons in deep mourning assisted at the latter, but there was neither coffin nor catafalque at either.

To the *Bon Pasteur*, an affiliation of the *Maison Mère* at Angers, of sixteen Sisters, thirty-five penitents, and forty-five orphans educated by the Sisters. It has been established here seventeen years. The penitents have no occupation but needlework, and are not instructed in anything but religion. Many of them, after their probation, remain in the house as Lay-Sisters.

There is no separate "order of the Magdalen," as at Hammersmith, in which, though it consists exclusively of "penitents," they may take vows of the same nature as other professed Nuns. The Nuns are very closely cloistered, and never go beyond their own garden, or admit strangers into their interior.

The dress is white cloth, with a black veil and sky-blue *cordelière* and tassels, a silver heart hangs on the breast. The *grille* is double; the outer cross-barred, and without spikes, the inner one simply barred. The building is small in proportion to their *œuvres*. The chapel is not open to the public, and the orphanage and *pension* for penitents are *within* the *communauté*. It was the *fête* of the *Supérieure* to-day, and they were keeping it as a holiday.

The history of the origin of this order offers some interesting particulars. The foundress, Madame de Combé, was the daughter of a Dutch gentleman, named Jean de Cyz, and was born at Leyden in 1656.

Though educated in heretical doctrines, she always manifested a decided predilection for the Catholic faith; and having, providentially, in early childhood, fallen in with a good priest, living in exile in her native town, he evinced so lively an interest in her welfare, that he lost

no opportunity of instructing her in those truths which ultimately took such firm root in her mind, and in time brought forth their marvellous fruits.

She was much persecuted by her family for her religious tendencies, and finally left them to visit a friend in England, with whom she remained three years. At the expiration of this time, her parents recalled her to marry a man of large fortune, M. de Combé, who, from his violent and ill-regulated temper, led her so wretched a life, that at the end of two years she obtained a separation from him, which he only survived six months.

After his death, she was sought in marriage by another wealthy suitor, who was charmed with her singular beauty and other attractions; but she had been too much disgusted with her first union ever to think of forming a second.

Her parents being dead, she took up her abode with a married sister, whose husband appears to have been a bigoted Calvinist; and it was during this period of her history that she was called from a life of worldliness to discover, by inward contemplation, how entirely she had run counter to the voice of God. Distracted by controversial researches and conversations, she was reduced to an extreme state of perplexity as to the course she should adopt; but after a retreat of some days, during which she made her spiritual condition a subject of special prayer, she thought she distinguished a voice encouraging her with the assurance that her supplications had been heard, and that the will of God would be revealed to her. Impelled by a mysterious and unaccountable influence, she rose and rushed to the window, where, the first object which met her gaze was a priest passing with the Holy Viaticum, upon which, throwing herself on her face, and adoring the Blessed Sacrament, she exclaimed, "Je vous connais dès cet instant, mon Dieu; me voici Catholique!"

The fury of her brother-in-law, when he discovered

her conversion, knew no bounds. He persecuted her by every means in his power, the consequence of which treatment was an illness, which brought her to the brink of the grave; and it was at this period that, through the instrumentality of her maid, who was a Catholic, she was received into the Church by the *Vicaire* de St. Sulpice, who only obtained admission to her through the interference of the law.

Having recovered, contrary to all expectation, she devoted herself entirely to a religious life, selling all her worldly goods to distribute their value, and living in the practice of much self-denial; until, feeling herself distinctly called—in which call she was further confirmed by a very remarkable coincidence—to take up the cause of erring persons of her own sex, she established in the Rue du Cherche Midi the foundations of the *Bon Pasteur*. In consequence of the poverty to which Madame de Combé had reduced herself, the community were obliged to gain their livelihood by the work of their hands, which being often insufficient, she herself was in the habit of begging for them from door to door. One day, when they were reduced to a state of utter destitution, and she saw none but God could help them, she ran to St. Sulpice, threw herself before the altar, and just as she had finished her prayer, in which she had exposed all the wants of her little flock to God, a stranger approached her, and put into her hands a purse containing fifty pieces of gold.

So marvellous an intervention strengthened her confidence to such an extent, that nothing could any longer discourage her, though she had yet many trials to encounter. The work, however, prospered, notwithstanding all hindrances; and on the feast of Pentecost, 1688, the Archbishop of Paris sent his *grand vicaire* to bless the little chapel of the association, which was just completed, and to celebrate Mass there for the first time.

The order was admirably regulated, and produced such striking results, that it soon spread over France, and before long, besides three in Paris itself, Orleans, Troyes, Toulouse, Amiens, and Angers — which latter has since become the *Maison Mère* — each had its house.

Madame de Combé died in 1692, aged only thirty-six. The order of the *Bon Pasteur* consists of two classes of persons — of those called *Sisters*, whose conduct has always been regular, and of *Penitents*. The former consecrate their lives gratuitously to the conversion and sanctification of those who have fallen into sin; and the latter, as an expiation of their sins, voluntarily embrace a life of mortification, labour, and retirement. No distinction of country or parish is made in their reception, and no payment is accepted.

The Sisters do not make their profession before the age of twenty-three, and then only after two years' noviciate.

To the *Maison des Orphelins*, an ancient foundation, but now under the care of the *Sœurs de Jésus et de Marie* (de Gand), Chanoine Triest's institution. They are ten in number. This house receives 100 girls and fifty boys. They are taken at any age, and kept till eighteen. There are *ateliers* for the boys, who learn various trades. The girls are chiefly taught lace-making. At the termination of their apprenticeship, they are placed out to gain their own living.

The chapel is apparently new, and has been expensively decorated. Over the altar is a statue of the Blessed Virgin, under which is written, "*Mater Orphanorum, ora pro nobis.*" On the altar-front is embossed a pelican, gilt. The Sisters were in the choir, chanting the office. On either side the altar, as in all the houses of these Sisters, were respectively a figure of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Bernard. As I went out, I asked the damsel who opened the gate, how old the building was; to which she replied, without any

hesitation, "Dieu! c'est si vieux; ça doit avoir au moins deux mille ans!"

To the *Pauvres Sœurs*, of whom I was told there is only one other house existing.

The order partakes of the nature of the *Sœurs Noires*, but it is a different foundation, and owes its origin to St. Beatrice, who established it in the fourteenth century. There are twenty Sisters here, eighteen of whom were out nursing the sick, having been sent for, to various houses in the town. The chapel is old, but the house itself has been recently rebuilt: they have a spacious garden.

There is here, likewise, an Hospital, of which fifteen *Sœurs de la Charité* have charge.

A house of seven *Sœurs de Sainte Marie*, whose *Maison Mère* is at Namur.

One of fifteen *Sœurs de la Providence*, from Champion, and one of twenty Nuns of the contemplative order of barefooted *Carmélites*.

Left Mons in the afternoon for Tournay. This place seems almost as hilly as the last. It also boasts a "Singe d'Or," where I tried my fortune again under the same auspices. The canal runs through the town with a wide quay on either side, and is crossed by several, more or less picturesque bridges. The Cathedral stands about the centre of the town, and is a striking edifice, of very early date, having been built by Chilpéric. It is of gigantic proportions, and has four quaint turrets, which give it a peculiar character.

As I approached it, the bell began to ring loudly: imagining, therefore, there was to be a service, I tried first one door and then another; but Bath Abbey itself was never more closely secured, and on inquiring in the neighbourhood, I found it was merely a preliminary tolling for a funeral to-morrow.

CHAP. XX.

Saturday, Sept. 29th.— To the Cathedral, to eight o'clock Mass, which was said in a chapel in the north aisle, curiously constructed, with its altar to the west. The interior is striking ; the most remarkable feature being the lowness of the aisles, which have galleries above them ; these galleries, however, are not fitted with seats, and do not appear to be used for any purpose. The columns bear the stamp of a very early period, and the whole building has a solemnity and simplicity about it, wonderfully chaste and pleasing.

The congregation, which, in the course of a short time, had increased considerably, turned their chairs towards a deep recess in the south wall, forming a pretty little chapel, dedicated to the *Sacré Cœur de Marie*, of which I concluded they formed the *confrérie*. Presently the priest entered vested, and preceded by a chorister in scarlet cassock and white surplice, with a scarlet tippet. When arrived half way, he stopped, and, addressing the congregation, gave notice that whoever attended this Mass with the required intention and devotion, would obtain 100 days' indulgence. He further announced, that the person prayed for, three days previously, had since received the sacraments of the Church, and had died "*dans les meilleurs dispositions.*" He further requested their prayers for eighty intentions, some of which he said were "*de la dernière importance,*" and for 140 *pêcheurs et pêcheresses.*

He then pursued his way to the altar ; but, the mo-

ment he began the Mass, a "clerk," in plain clothes, who was kneeling in the middle of the congregation, commenced reading the seven sorrowful mysteries, and was joined by about two-thirds of the congregation, who repeated in a loud voice the second half of the "*Paters*" "*Aves*," and "*Glorias*." This lasted till Mass was very nearly concluded. He spoke with exceeding rapidity, and in French, only pausing once for about a minute during the elevation.

On one side of this smaller chapel, on a bracket, was a wax figure of Our Lord, clothed with the purple robe, and with a reed in His hands. Under it was a box, on which was written, "*Tronc du Sauveur flagellé.*" Over the altar, which was handsomely decorated, and surmounted by a silver statue of Our Lady and Infant Saviour, was the monogram MR., and on either side of the altar that of I.H.S., formed by small gas-jets.

After breakfast, I returned to the Cathedral, and on my way, passing through the Marché au Fruit, I found a funeral procession wending its way towards the north door. I joined it, and saw it was preceded by a processional crucifix, closely followed by three priests in black vestments, who were chanting the psalms; four acolyths walked behind; then came the coffin, borne by eight women in black, with small white three-cornered shawls and caps, and black veils; four boys carried processional lanthorns, another priest walked behind, and lastly, came one old man as chief, and, indeed, only mourner. I afterwards learned that the deceased was an old woman of eighty, and that this was her husband.

They entered the Cathedral, and carried their burden into the chapel in which I was this morning, where they deposited it on tressels prepared for it, around which burned sixteen long wax candles, in candlesticks muffled with black crape.

At the head of the coffin stood a gilt crucifix, and on either side two candles. Six more burned on the altar, and two in brackets at the sides.

On all the candles were fixed black shields, on each of which was painted, in white, a skull and crossbones. The service was all chanted, but without any instrumental accompaniment. The body was conveyed away in a hearse, and no coaches followed.

To the *Béguinage*, which, in its palmy days, must have been precisely like all other *Béguinages*, but has undergone sad reverses; and though it still retains much of its original character, it is evidently inhabited by a very different class of inmates. The plan is somewhat more regular than is usual, being an elongated square, and the two outer streets, which, as it were, form the boundary, have been converted into almshouses for the occupation of single women, who are located there by parochial authority, and live rent free. In the centre, a double stack of low houses, cheaply constructed and untidily furnished, has been built by the "*propriétaire*," who lets them out at small weekly rents to families of the poorest description.

On this spot, now consecrated to the saturnalia of roystering maidens, gossiping beldames, or wailing infants, once stood the Convent Church, with its silent graveyard, whose stillness was only broken by the soft peal of its gentle bell, calling the sequestered worshippers to their morning, noontide, and evening orisons; or when, in solemn tones, it boomed more deeply through the quiet evening air, to tell the passer-by "of his charity to pray" for the repose of a newly-departed soul, gone hence on its unknown journey to a far-off home.

Among the occupants of the almshouses are twenty-four women, calling themselves *Béguines*, or Sisters, who have obtained from the parochial divinities,— the "Tubbses"

and "Timmses" of Tournay,— the privilege of carrying the dead to burial.

It seems to be a time-honoured custom, peculiar to this and some other few towns in Belgium, and the pittance thus gained by these poor creatures helps to keep them alive. They wear a special costume for the occasion, and take the duty in turns, eight attending each time. Those I saw this morning, were one detachment of them; when there is to be a funeral, word is sent to one, who collects and marshals the rest.

To the *Sœurs Clarisses*, another branch of the Poor Clares of Bruges. They occupy an excellent site on the quay, formerly a convent of *Récollets*, who were dispersed at the revolution, and never returned hither. A large portion of the house, as well as the chapel, was destroyed; but what was left has been repaired, and the chapel is entirely new. It is very fresh, and prettily decorated, and the interior is snowy white; above the altar is an *œil de la Providence* in a triangle, from which issue golden rays; round it is the legend, "*Dieu me voit.*" Near the altar is a spiked *grille*, behind which the nuns assist at Mass.

In the centre of the marble floor stood an oak alms-box on a raised pedestal, surmounted by a carved crucifix, under which was written, "*Heureux celui qui ne prend que Dieu pour témoin de ses bonnes œuvres.*"

The exterior, or Lay-Sisters, were saying the office in Latin; the nuns themselves never eat meat, and the Lay-Sisters very rarely. There are twenty-four of the former and eight of the latter. Their rule is similar to that of those I have described before, and their occupation, the gratuitous instruction of poor children.

Closely adjoining this, is a new, handsomely-built, red-brick edifice, standing within its own walled garden. It is a foundation of ancient date, but revived, since the revolution, by the late Queen, for providing house-room,

free of rent, for twenty widows of persons in reduced circumstances. Half of them receive, in addition, 100 francs a year, so that those who still retain any annuity of their own, get on very comfortably. Their little rooms are provided with cooking-stoves, and are very neat in appearance.

Returning from this, I fell in with a quondam convent of *Célestins*, demolished at the revolution. It was at first converted into a *caserne*, and is now a *dépôt* for the horses of the cavalry troops! It must have been a most extensive and beautiful building, but tells a sad tale of merciless and barbarous persecution. The plan may easily be traced out, and the external walls, which are unusually substantial, as well as portions of the edifice, still stand, bearing their tacit but eloquent testimony to the contrasted scenes which must have succeeded each other there.

"All is silent now:—silent the bell
Which, heard from yonder ivyed turret high,
Warned the cowled Brother from his midnight cell:
Silent the Vesper chant—the Litany
Responsive to the organ. Scattered lie
The wrecks of the proud pile."

Near this spot stands a spacious convent of *Dames de St. André*, for the education of girls of the upper class. It is admirably constructed, and arranged very much in the style of the *Nouveau Bois* at Ghent, though superior in all respects.

There are fifty-three Sisters and 150 pupils, who, despite all the excellences and advantages of the school, pay about *25l.* a year only. They have an *externat* for 300 children of the poorer class.

There is a house of twenty-five *Sœurs Noires* here, some of whom are always at the *Hôpital Civil;* also

Thirty-three *Sœurs de la Charité de Jésus et de Marie*, whose *œuvre* here extends to the care of *aliénées*, and comprehends the charge of incurables of both sexes and the education of orphans.

Forty-five *Ursulines* for the instruction of children of the two classes.

Twenty-three *Carmélites Déchaussés*, and

Twelve *Sœurs de la Sagesse*, established for educational *œuvres*.

To the Church of St. Jacques, where, as at others in Tournay, I observed all notices and inscriptions were in French. Indeed this place, as well as Mons, seem like French settlements in Flanders, and the inhabitants rather pique themselves on being looked upon as French.

There is a great amount of carved oak in this church, and the pulpit is an elaborate specimen of foliage and rockwork. The sounding-board is formed by the overshadowing branches of a palm-tree; above it is seated a group of angels, holding an open book, on the leaves of which are written, in gold letters, the following lines from the "*Dies iræ*,"

"Liber Scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde Mundus judicetur."

At the side of the pulpit is one of the most beautifully expressive crucifixes I ever saw, also carved in oak.

Beneath is a cave, representing the lions' den, in which is seen the figure of Daniel, in white marble. A lion stands near him, spiritedly carved; but the face is too human, and wears a somewhat comical expression, as if he enjoyed the turn matters were about to take, and thought the affair a capital joke.

On the wall are some brasses of early date, exhibiting grotesque figures, and recording, in old characters and antiquated orthography, divers benefactions to the parish: one of them to the effect that "*L'Honorable Hom̄e Jean Socassin, et dēlle Barbe sa fem̄e, pour le salut de leurs Ames*," had desired an "*Obit Solemnel*" to be said "*chasque*

an, enuiron le XXII. *Jul^ii.*," and that upon each such occasion "IIII. *hottes de bled de froment,*" made into "*pains blancs,*" should be distributed to "XIII. *des plus pauures hom̄es de ceste paroisse;*" and further, that these thirteen poor men should attend the said "*obit solemnel, revestus de manteaux de draps noirs de* IIII. *aulnes chasque un, du prix de un fl. Flamand chasque aulne.*"

Left Tournay this afternoon, reaching Courtrai about three. Here everything is Flemish again.

Visited the town-hall, to see the old carved stone chimney-pieces, which are decidedly curious specimens of art; but, though exceedingly grotesque, they bear the date of the end of the sixteenth century: one of them, that in the lower room, is undergoing the process of cleaning and painting.

The upper room itself is extremely picturesque and characteristic, but of much smaller dimensions than Haghe's famous drawing would lead one to expect.

There are, in Courtrai, a considerable number of religious houses, but only three of men, which are as follow:

One of fifteen *Frères de la Charité*, who occupy themselves with the education of poor children, and also visit and nurse the sick of their own sex at home.

Another is that of the *Frères des Bonnes Œuvres*, whose *Maison Mère* is at Renaix, five in number. Their chief occupation is affording elementary instruction to children of the poorer class.

The third is a small *Jesuit College*, of about six or seven Fathers, from Tronchiennes, whose work here seems to be chiefly of the missionary character.

Of women there is a house of twenty *Sœurs Noires;* also one of ten *Sœurs Servantes de Marie*, for the same object.

A congregation of twelve *Sœurs Hospitalières de St.*

Augustin, who have charge of the patients of both sexes at the Hospital of Nôtre Dame.

One of twelve *Sœurs Hospitalières du Hameau*, whose manifold *œuvres* comprise:—an hospital for the sick of both sexes and all ages; the charge of insane persons; a school for the children of the middle class, who pay a small sum, and a gratuitous class for the poor, who are likewise *instructed* in manual labour of various descriptions; an asylum for aged persons and orphans, served by six *Sœurs Hospitalières.*

A *refuge* in connection with the *Bureau de Bienfaisance de Courtrai*, served by twenty-four *Sœurs de la Charité de la Sainte-famille*, where poor men who are old or infirm are received. To it are also attached wards for *incurables* of both sexes.

The *Sœurs de Jésus et de Marie*, to the number of eighteen, have an affiliation here; their principal object being elementary instruction to poor children.

There is likewise a congregation of thirty *Sœurs Hospitalières de Bruges*, who undertake the education of 100 orphans at the Hospice St. Nicolas, where they have likewise a *pensionnat* and *externat* for girls.

The *Sœurs de la Charité de St. Vincent de Paul*, sixty-five in number, receive into a house they have here, destitute girls and infirm women, and keep, besides, an *école manufacturière* and an *externat.*

Two houses of *Sœurs Paulines*, of ten Sisters each, have established, the first an *externat* and *infant-school*, and the second an *atelier d'apprentissage pour filles*, and an *hospice d'orphelines.*

Of contemplative orders, there is a convent of twenty-eight *Carmélites*, and one of forty-five *Colettines.* There are, further, the remains of a *Béguinage*, in which still linger fourteen *Béguines.*

To vespers at St. Martin, a church rather peculiar in

construction, and possessing some good pictures. Of two by Vandyke, one is extremely similar, both in design and style of execution, to Rubens' famous "Descent."

There stands on the north side of the chancel, a rich tabernacle of carved stone, in middle-pointed style: it is ascended by steps. At Benediction, the Sacred Host was taken from within it, and carried to the high altar, after which it was returned to its place; after the service, nearly all those who had been present, men and women, remained for confession.

To Nôtre Dame, an old church, founded in 1286 by Count Baudouin, of Flanders, but much modernised and profusely panelled, or rather lined, with white and grey marble; the floor was also liberally inlaid.

There are north and south altars in the transepts; on either side of the entrance to the chancel are colossal figures in plaster, of St. Peter and St. Paul. Over the east altar, at the extremity of the north aisle, is a figure of St. Roch healing persons stricken with the plague; under it is a quotation from Numbers, "et stans inter mortuos et viventes pro populo deprecatus est, et plagus cessavit."

In one chapel, north of the chancel, were a considerable number of *élèves du séminaire*, young lads of from sixteen to twenty, waiting their turns to go into the confessional, and kneeling with great modesty and devotion near the spot. Courtrai does not seem to be much visited by the English, and just now there are apparently few strangers of any kind. My companions at supper were only three in number, and all Belgians; they were disconnected, and dropped in separately, but all asked for *tea*.

At eight the soldiers beat their *rappel* through the streets, and shortly after, the quiet little town seemed sunk in silence and repose. At about twelve, I was preparing to retire, when I thought I heard a sudden *fracas* in the

Grande Place, a *fanfare* sounding a long way off, which was taken up and repeated from distance to distance. I was deliberating as to whether it could be anything unusual, when the *tocsin* began to toll a lugubrious peal. I threw open the window, and though all lights were extinguished but that of the illuminated clock in the belfry, the moon soon enabled me to discover that the whole of the inhabitants were in movement, their costume, in which a conical white head-dress, finishing in an erect tassel, predominated, betokening that the worthy burghers had been roused *à l'improviste.* I hastened down the old-fashioned oak stairs, and out at the *porte-cochère,* and had no sooner turned the corner of the street, than the cause of the *vacarme* became but too apparent. A red, lurid glare illumined one half the heavens, and the vivid flames, which ever and anon sent up their forked and angry rays, showed that a fire, which was raging at no great distance, was far from being under control.

The trumpets and the alarm-bell shortly brought plenty of hands to the scene of action ; a troop of military were soon making for the spot, and a band of men, bearing torches, rushed on, leading the way. Engines too, there were, and an apology for a fire-brigade; but water was totally wanting, and without this necessary element, the engines might of course as well have remained at home. The burning house, which I soon reached, was in the faubourg, a good half mile out of the town, and the sole chance of extinguishing the conflagration lay in the exertions of those who could either draw water from the wells, or supply it by pailfuls from the pump! Under these circumstances, the only available course was wisely and promptly adopted; the soldiers set themselves lustily to work, and with the help of the firemen, placing their ladders against the wall, and scaling the roof, commenced vigorously pulling down a house on each side of that at-

tacked. After a time, water being obtained, but in very insufficient quantities, it was directed by the engines on to the rubbish which was now accumulating on either side the burning mass ; the centre house was of course abandoned, to burn itself out.

I saw several priests in the crowd, but happily their services were not needed, no life having been lost, or even endangered. The fire, I afterwards learned, was the work of an incendiary, and the owner was not insured.

Sunday, Sept. 30th.—To eight o'clock Mass at St. Martin. The congregation all of the lower class, but the church so full, that, the doors being set open, the people filled the porch, and even stood on the steps. High Mass is at half-past nine, but I was told, that at eight is the most crowded of any. Returned at half-past nine, but though the church was not so full, the congregation were of the same class as before. I cannot say much for the music, which was selected in the worst possible taste, and necessitated as much tuning as the orchestra at Her Majesty's Theatre. The altars, and indeed the whole chancel, were brilliantly and tastefully illuminated, and the vestments were very handsome.

A Flemish sermon followed the Gospel, on which I took my departure, proceeding to *Nôtre Dame.* Here the congregation were of a higher order, but the sermon was likewise in Flemish, and the subject I concluded to be that of the day,—the F. of St. Michael,—as I caught a quotation from " San Gregorius der Groote." The chancel was filled by the congregation, who, at the sermon, turned their chairs round to face the pulpit, and consequently sat with their backs to the altar.

Left Courtrai about noon, and, after passing through the ordeal of two *douânes*, reached Lille in about an hour. I could not help remarking, during our *trajèt*,

the total cessation of field-labour. The most rigid puritan could not have desired a more tranquil "Sabbath."

The smaller packages were searched at Mouscron, the frontier, and the larger awaited our arrival at Lille itself. As I stood, key in hand, waiting till my unpretending *valise* had been turned over by the moustachioed officials, I noticed a little foreigner near me, with somewhat unclean hands, covered with showy rings; and as I thought the officer eyed him suspiciously, I was curious to see what would follow. "Et vous, Monsieur," at length said the latter, addressing him abruptly . . . "Avez-vous quelque chose à déclarer?" "Oui, Monsieur" . . . answered he, with a look of candour rather clumsily assumed, as he opened a leather hat-box . . . "oui, j'ai là-dedans vingt-quatre cigarres." "Ah, c'est cela; et pas davantage?" . . "Voilà tout," said the traveller, beginning to flinch under the scrutinising glance of the *douânier*, who answered, "C'est ce que nous allons voir;" and with that he uncorded a large wooden trunk, and lifting the lid, very deliberately applied his nose to the contents, which though apparently filled with wearing-apparel, emitted a most unmistakeable odour of tobacco. "Oui, n'est-ce pas," said the owner, with forced composure, and forestalling the inquiry, "ça sent le tabac? c'est que je fume beaucoup, moi; et naturellement tout ce que je porte en conserve l'odeur."

"Ah, vous croyez?" said the searcher, "eh bien, moi je trouve que ça sent le tabac, *non*-fumé;" and plunging his hand, as if by intuition, exactly in the right direction, he drew it up loaded with another two-dozen packet of the same commodity; then, laying them down very coolly, he observed, "en voilà déjà *quatre* douzaines." The smuggler —for there was now no longer any doubt of his vocation — turned very white, and pointing to a boy of about twelve years old, who stood close to him, he said, "Ah, malheureux! qu'as-tu fait! n'est-ce pas indigne de

tromper ton père de la sorte?" The poor lad seemed taken quite aback, and was about to reply, when his real or pretended father stopped him short with, "tais-toi, malheureux enfant, et n'ajoute pas le mensonge à ta première faute;" then, turning to the officer, he said, apologetically, "Monsieur, c'est un enfant, je conviens qu'il a bien mal agi, mais." . . . . "Comment y mêlez-vous cet enfant?" interrupted the officer authoritatively, "cette malle est bien à vous." "Du tout," answered he, "elle porte mon adresse, il est vrai, mais elle appartient à mon fils, et c'est lui qui s'est avisé de faire cette sottise, sans me consulter; ah! il savait bien avec qui il aurait eu affaire s'il m'en avait prévenu. Je vous promets que je ne manquerai pas de le punir avec la dernière rigueur."

"Oh, Monsieur, quant à ça," answered the officer, "je ne pense pas qu'on vous laissera cette peine; ce sera nous qui nous chargerons, après un stricte examen, bien entendu, de châtier le coupable."

During this conversation the search was still proceeding, and the superintendent, who, in the mean time, had been called, having removed the contents of the box, began tapping with his knuckles on the bottom of it, at which he certainly seemed to arrive much sooner than the depth externally would have led one to expect. He did not long leave himself in doubt as to the cause, but passing the point of a knife all round, he broke through the lining-paper, and raising a thin layer of wood, disclosed, within a false bottom of about four inches in depth, a large quantity of cigars, closely packed, and numbering between 300 and 400.

Here the discussion was brought to a close, the man was led away trembling violently, and the poor boy who had acted as scapegoat, whether distressed at his father's misdemeanour, or ashamed of the suspicion which had been thrown on himself, covered his face with his hands,

and sobbed loudly. He was carried off in another direction, that the truth might be elicited by a double investigation.

Passing the Church of St. Maurice, on my way to an hotel, I looked in and found baptisms were going forward. Two parties came in separately, but though at the same time, the whole ceremony was gone through for each child.

Returned to the same church to vespers. Among the congregation was a poor-school, consisting of about 200 boys, conducted by two *Frères des Ecoles*. The church was very full, and the congregation of mixed classes. The sermon was of course in French; eloquent and energetic, on the subject of last Sunday's Gospel, the love of God.

Near me knelt a school of grown-up girls, about sixty in number, accompanied by two *Sœurs de l'Enfant Jésus*.

Many of them wore silver medals suspended round their necks, some from a sky-blue, and others from a green ribbon. They took them out of their pockets, carefully wrapped in paper, and, first kissing them, put them round their necks, one of their companions fixing them with a pin behind; they all appeared attentive and devout during the service.

Returned through the *Place de la Bourse*, a handsome old quadrangle, communicating with the *Grande Place*, of mixed brick and stone, and not long since restored.

There are two theatres here, and both were of course open to-night.

Monday, Oct. 1*st.*—To the Eglise St. Maurice, and also to that of Ste. Catherine, at both of which were the schools with their *Frères*.

To call on M. l'Abbé Dennel, at the Séminaire de St. Joseph, who was very communicative upon parochial and ecclesiastical matters, both in France and Belgium. Of the latter he told me as follows, viz.: that there is one archbishopric, that of Malines, and five bishoprics, viz.,

those of Bruges, Ghent, Liége, Namur, and Tournay. The Archbishop has three *Vicaires-Généraux*, and a chapter of twelve canons. The Cathedral is, in all cases, the parish-church, excepting at Liége.

The nomination of ecclesiastical functionaries belongs to the Bishop of the diocese; but no new territory can be erected into a cure, succursal, or chapelry, with the appointment of a stipend from the treasury, unless by authority of the Government.

The revenue of the Archbishop is 21,000 francs, or 840*l.* per annum; that of the Bishops 14,700 francs, or 588*l.*; the vicars-general of the archbishopric 3600 francs, and the vicars-general of bishoprics 3200 francs.

The titular canons of the archbishopric receive 2400 francs, those of the bishoprics 2000 francs. The *Curés de la Première Classe* receive 2047 francs 50 centimes, and those *de la Seconde Classe* 1365 francs per annum. The appointment of Bishops is by a conclave of Bishops.

In each diocese is a *Grand Séminaire* for the education of priests, the subsidy accorded to which by Government, amounts to 8000 francs per annum.

The ministers of Protestant congregations throughout the country are paid by the Government, and receive the same stipend as the Catholic parochial clergy.

With respect to France, she numbers eighty-four bishoprics, including the colonial bishoprics of Algiers, Martinique, and Guadeloupe.

He told me that in France it often happened that Bishops had risen from among the *peuple:* this was remarkable in the case of Monseigneur de Fréjus, who was a very distinguished man.

A French Bishop receives 10,000 francs, an Archbishop 15,000 francs, and a *Vicaire-Général* 3000 to 4000 francs.

Bishops in France are nominated by the Government, by virtue of a concordat, bearing the date of the reign of

Francis I., but subject to the consent of the Holy Father. The Government nominates three, out of whom his Holiness fixes on the one who is to receive the appointment.

There is rarely any disagreement on this point, though such *has* been the case at times, when the Government has been actually hostile to the Church; as during the latter part of the reign of Napoleon I., at the time he detained Pius VII. in captivity, when, wishing to arrogate to himself ecclesiastical as well as civil power, he attempted to appoint Bishops, without the concurrence of the Holy See.

Again, under Louis Philippe, such cases had occurred; but it has generally been remarked that it has become necessary to eject Bishops so appointed, from their sees.

It has also happened, that when the Government has made an election which Rome has not seen fit to ratify, and has refused to appoint a substitute, the Pope has allowed the bishopric to remain vacant, awaiting better times.

When a new see is to be erected, the sanction of the Holy Father is essential to confirm the appointment made by the state.

French Bishops receive a fixed annual revenue from the Government. This arrangement is the result of a concordat between Napoleon I. and Pius VII., by which it was understood that the ecclesiastical property, seized and confiscated by the state at the revolution, was to be restored in this way, and was to be considered as a matter of right, and not of remuneration.

All the Bishops live very economically; the state provides, furnishes, and entertains their palaces. Some Bishops live *en communauté* with their *Vicaires-Généraux*, and their habits are the simplest possible, their chief meal rarely consisting of more than two dishes.

The Buonaparte family are said all to have had more or less religion; while in the Bourbons it would seem to be

extinct, and their last representative on the throne was apparently no more than a "*philosophe* incrédule."

Abbé Dennel accounted for the understanding, such as it was, which had been maintained between Church and State during his reign, by attributing it to the influence of the Queen, who, like her daughters, was an "ange de piété."

Speaking of Brittany, he described it as by far the most catholic and religious portion of France, and attributed the simplicity of their faith, and the purity of their manners, to their peculiar dialect, or patois, which has never been lost among them, and which renders their intercommunication with strangers a matter of great difficulty.

The inhabitants of Normandy as well as those of French Flanders, he said, were, as a rule, devoted to the practice of pious and charitable works, "mais," added he emphatically, "nous ne valons pas les Brétons."

It is out of the true and generous soil of Brittany that have sprung two modern but beautiful orders, *Les Sœurs de la Sagesse*, and that interesting community of the *Petites Sœurs des Pauvres*.

The *Séminaire de St. Joseph*, of which Abbé Dennel is *Supérieur*, is chiefly an *externat* for middle and upper class boys; but being vacation-time, there was not much to be seen.

CHAP. XXI.

THERE are in Lille many religious houses, for the most interesting of which, M. Dennel was good enough to supply me with introductions.

Of these I visited, first, the *Maison Mère des Sœurs de l'Enfant Jésus*, an order founded some twenty or thirty years since, the history of which is peculiar and interesting.

The foundress was a poor servant-girl, who, devoting all her savings and spare moments to works of charity and devotion, at length made an humble beginning, by associating with herself two others of her own class, which number she gradually increased, till, by the advice of her director, first a room, and then a small house, was taken, in which the little society could combine to carry out their works of piety. These were ultimately organised and fixed by rules, and the order spreading rapidly, a number of houses were formed, and soon scattered themselves over the diocese, besides settling one congregation at Charleroi and two in Belgium.

The foundress, who is still living, judged herself too uneducated and uninformed to accept the responsibilities of a Superioress, and therefore took the position of a subordinate in one of the houses formed in an agricultural district, a few miles from Lille. They combine a variety of *œuvres*—the care of the insane, the education of children of all classes, infant-schools, the care of the poor at the Hôpital Général, and the instruction of the working classes.

There are about 400 Sisters in the order, forty-five in this house; of these four attend to the *pensionnat*, some are *Sœurs Réposantes*, and some novices.

Their habit is very singular, being entirely black, with the exception of a scarlet *cordelière* and tassels round the waist. The cap is black, and of a very unusual shape, covering the head closely, concealing the ears, and descending in two circular ends upon the cheeks. Out of doors they wear a black veil, which is drawn so far over the face as to prevent them from being recognised, and only admits of their seeing the ground immediately before them as they walk.

The chapel is neat; Mass is said daily by a resident chaplain. The Sisters occupy the stalls, each of which is divided from the next by a large wooden cross, on which hangs a crown of thorns. In the antechapel, which is filled with seats for the *pensionnaires*, there is another altar.

At Christmas time, when occurs the greatest festival of the order, this antechapel, which is large, is fitted up to represent the stable of Bethlehem, and remains thus until the Feast of the Purification. Again also, in the Mois de Marie, it is once more decorated; but then with a profusion of garlands and flowers. Persons who were curious to see it on these occasions, used to flock hither in such numbers, that they have now been obliged to restrict the admissions to the relatives of the Sisters, or others specially invited.

Close to this is the *Abattoir*, on the model of those at Paris.

To the *Sœurs de la Sagesse*, whose *œuvre* is the care and education of the deaf, dumb, and blind, combined with an *externat* and a *salle d'asile;* but this being the vacation, I was not able to see much.

The dress is exceedingly picturesque and becoming,

and partakes very much of the character of that of the *Sœurs de St. Vincent.* The peculiar cap worn by the latter has been adopted nearly without alteration, but it is of transparent instead of opaque material, and the grey dress they wear is lighter in colour. A muslin handkerchief, crossed over the breast under the dress, covers the throat, and replaces the stiff collar and bands worn by the S. V. Sisters. The dress is cut square in front, and, rising above it on the breast, may be seen a portion of a wooden crucifix which is worn beneath.

Over the back wall of the house is trained a vine, respecting which the same rule prevails as in the houses of the *Sœurs de St. Vincent*, where each Sister has a right to as many bunches of grapes as she can reach by putting her arm out of the window of her cell. As it may be supposed, this privilege is not valued for the sake of the fruit, but for the power it gives them of shewing little attentions to their friends, or to any of the inmates of the house to whom they wish to be kind.

To the *Sœurs du Sacré Cœur*, an educational institution for children of the higher class, emanating from the *Maison Mère* of this order at Paris; attached to it is a gratuitous *externat* for 250 children.

The Sisters are twenty-five in number, their dress is black, with a white fluted cap, the border of which forms a wide circle round the face; over this is thrown a black veil, and suspended round the neck is a silver cross, with a heart of the same metal attached to it, which is not worn until a nun has been professed five years.

The institution is, like all others of this nature, beautifully arranged, and the education, which, according to the prospectus, is very complete, is supplied—board and lodging complete for 20*l.* per annum.

There is a confraternity of the *Sacré Cœur de Jésus et de Marie*, at Lille; indeed, these confraternities must, by

this time, be very numerous in France, as they were extremely widespread before the revolution, and came to light again with the revival which has since taken place; between the years 1705 and 1743, no fewer than 328 were established there, of which eight are in Paris. An old volume on the *Parfait Adoration du Sacré Cœur*, by P. Nicollet, published in 1754, states:—

"Dans l'Eglise Paroissiale de St. Lancret, à Paris, s'est faite en 1746 la première fondation, à la gloire du sacré cœur de Jésus et de Marie."

It also contains an account of the weekly services on Fridays, in the different localities where these societies are established, which shews the devotion to be tolerably universal. The earliest was established in 1697, and the latest in 1741.

24 in Italy.	6 in Savoy.	113 in Germany.
24 „ Poland.	9 „ Lithuania.	13 „ Bohemia.
20 „ Spain.	1 „ Majorca.	4 „ Portugal.
5 „ Turkey,	1 „ Persia.	5 „ East Indies.
1 „ Canada.	5 „ American Islands.	5 „ Mexico.

34 „ Belgium, of which one at Bruges was established among the English Jesuits in 1767, and another in the Church of St. Gilles in 1816, numbers 3000 members.

In the "Rue des Malades" is an hospital under the patronage of St. John Baptist, of which eight Augustinian nuns have the charge, intended for the benefit of thirteen old people, men and women, the poorest and most infirm that can be found. Its history is curious, and perhaps it is stranger still that this foundation should have stood unharmed through all the horrors of war, and the sanguinary devastations of revolution, which have demolished all around it.

The pious John of Ghent, or "Jean de la Cambe," its founder, was an alabaster-merchant, and wealthy citizen of Lille, who flourished about the middle of the fifteenth century. In the year 1441, when Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, was reigning, Jean de la Cambe was elected "King of the Thorn."

This title, perhaps, needs some explanation, being one of those local traditions which may not be very generally known. The festival of the Thorn, we are told, originated with John of Constantinople, during the reign of Philip Augustus, in the year 1220, and was signalised by jousts, tournaments, and games of strength and skill; with which religious practices were always united, and multitudes were drawn to the spot upon each annual election.

The "monarch" of the year was chosen by the magistrates, the necessary conditions requiring that he should be a citizen of respectable birth and position, liberal in politics, and sufficiently wealthy to furnish the expences of the entertainments over which he presided.

In the Dominican Convent was preserved the precious relic which gave its name to the solemnity, being none other than a thorn from Our Saviour's crown, and immediately upon his proclamation, it was customary for the new king to repair with his court to the convent church to venerate the holy object. With most this was a mere empty form, having, like so many other practices of piety instituted with a holy intent, degenerated from its pristine intention. Not so, however, when John de la Cambe went in his turn to kneel before it. No sooner had he prostrated himself, than his whole soul seemed absorbed in the contemplation; to him this minute portion of a relic was suggestive of the highest and holiest aspirations; indeed, so completely oblivious was he of all beside the devotion that occupied him, that the people were completely mystified at the length of his orisons, and began to grow impatient for his return.

At last he appeared, and his faithful squire Pierron having assisted him to mount, the gay procession wended its way through the old streets, followed by a throng of admiring beholders; but as for him, he passed on unheeding the pageant in which he was chief actor, for his

mind was still impressed with the bleeding vision he had been contemplating, and if his thoughts wandered from Jesus crowned with thorns, it was only to compare the glittering cavalcade before him with Jesus sitting meek and lowly upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Twenty times since this day had Jean de la Cambe been succeeded in his royal honours—that is to say, it was the year 1461 — when Lille was visited by a dire famine. Jean, with the ready and profuse hand of charity, opened his stores to all who came to him, until his resources, large as they had been, were completely exhausted. His granaries were empty, and though the famished poor, with worn and wasted countenances, still looked into his face for sympathy and help, even the contents of his larder and the coins of his purse had been bestowed, and his servants began to complain of the lavish liberality with which their master had reduced himself to poverty. One day, when he seemed to have nothing more to give, a poor starving suppliant came to the gate, begging but one handful of corn. Pierron, who answered her summons, received the petition with a somewhat churlish scowl, but still informed his master of her request. "Go," said he, "and sweep out the granary, that she may not be sent away empty." Pierron demurred, assuring his master that this had already been done. "Go, nevertheless," said Jean, "and do as I have bidden thee," and with that he cast himself on his knees. He was still pleading with his Divine Lord, when Pierron returned, in a paroxysm of terror and amazement, to inform him that the granary was so full he could not open the door without help; and so in very truth it was, and thus was Jean enabled to continue his pious liberalities until it pleased God to restore plenty to the land.

It is in this house that have been for four centuries, and are now, located the Augustine nuns and their infirm

pensioners, to whose service he bequeathed it and the surrounding land. The granary is still to be seen, and bears the name of "*Grenier du Miracle.*" It is used as a dormitory, and in it stands a silver *reliquaire*, in which are preserved some of the grains of the miraculous wheat.

The original destination of the hospital has been so far altered, that now women only are received, and in a much more considerable number than formerly.

The lofty and primitive dormitories still stand; the old hall, embellished with rich and grotesque carvings, which serves as a sitting or work-room for the inmates, and the refectory, in which are old and valuable paintings, are all there. The arms of the founder are emblazoned on the outer doors of a diptych, within which is a representation of St. John Baptist and a portrait of the founder.

To the Church of St. André, a very handsome, richly decorated, Corinthian building, polychromatised in most costly style.

The roof of the chancel is deep blue, powdered with gold stars, the divisions picked out in rich and varied, but well harmonised, colour. Part of the roof of the aisles is treated in the same manner, the whole being ultimately destined to be completed *en suite.*

The roof of the sacrarium, which is domed, is a masterpiece of art. It represents the Hierarchy of Heaven and Saints on earth united in adoring the Blessed Trinity. It is only just completed, and though it presents the effect of a fresco, was painted at Metz, and has been transferred by a new process, invented by the father of the artist M. Hussenot.

Back to the table-d'hôte dinner at five, where all the guests were French, and theatres the subject of conversation.

Tuesday, Oct. 2nd.—To eight o'clock Mass at the Madeleine, a pseudo-Corinthian building. The schools were

here again to-day, as at the other churches yesterday. There were four distinct schools, of about 100 boys each, under the care of two *Frères.*

As they went out two and two, one boy preceded them holding the *goupillon*, which each boy touched as he passed.

To the *Hôpital Général*, or poor-house, an immense building on the quay, with imposing façade, under the surveillance of twenty-one *Sœurs de l'Enfant Jésus.* It is about three times as extensive as that at Douai, and contains 1600 poor—old persons of both sexes, as well as incurables and orphans. There is a ward for insane persons, another for epileptics, and a third for those who have sores or wounds, but it is *not* an hospital, the *Hospice St. Sauveur* being expressly designed for sick persons of all descriptions. Attached to this institution is a *Crêche*, for the reception of *enfans abandonnés*, to which was formerly affixed a *tour;* but this has been suppressed of late, and those who wish to deposit their children must now *bring* them in.

Notwithstanding this permission, they often deposit them under the windows, and before the doors of the *Hôpital*, or forsake them in the streets or in their own houses, when they are brought in by the neighbours. Children thus adopted by the house, are at first received into the *Crêche*, which is a large airy room, provided with neat little white cribs. They are kept here only till arrangements can be made for their reception in the home of some poor woman in the country, where they are sent to be nursed. Inspectors belonging to the institution visit these *cantons* or villages about every three months, and take cognizance of their condition. When old enough, they are sent to their parish-school, and at eighteen are either placed in service or apprenticed at the expence of the *Hôpital.*

Orphans, and other children who are forsaken at a

later age, are retained at the house and educated by the Sisters; when old enough, they are employed in needlework for the inmates, being paid so much a day, according to what they do. They all sit at work together, in what is called the *ouvroir des filles.*

The children and young women's department occupies one *corps de bâtiment;* that of the old women a second; that of the old men a third; incurables a fourth; and that of the young men a fifth.

The house is of stone, and endless in extent. It is built round five spacious quadrangles, or courts, filled up with flower-beds and walks. Each of these buildings is six stories high, and they are all connected by a gallery or corridor—over the cloister on the ground-floor—which goes round the whole at every story, and, besides assisting ventilation, gives access to the various dormitories, work-rooms, class-rooms, sick wards, *ateliers*, refectories, *lingerie, buanderie, boulangerie, pharmacie*, and kitchen. They are broad, and paved with stone flags, and give one the idea of so many streets one above the other.

They bake not only their own bread, but that of all the hospitals in the town. Beer is contracted for, and seems to be consumed in large quantities, that and a sort of *tisane* being the staple drink of the house. Those who desire any other beverage must procure it at their own expence.

All the inmates are clothed by the house, and the dress is particularly neat, having not the least appearance of a charity costume.

It consists of a puce stuff gown, with a printed shawl and white cap. In the *ouvroir des vieilles* I saw 350 old women, all wearing this uniform, engaged in various kinds of women's handicraft—lace-making, crocheting, sewing, knitting, knotting, and, I might add, some few *nodding.* My fair readers must excuse me if I have in my ignorance

misnamed any of the useful arts which employ their agile fingers, and for which I hope they will believe I entertain the greatest respect. Out of the earnings they thus gain, many contrive to save sufficient to treat themselves to a superfluous glass or two every Sunday, the effects of which indulgence are generally detected on their return home — when they *do* return — or in their prolonged absence, when sometimes these elderly truants are so wild as not to "go home till morning." These excesses are necessarily visited with much severity; and the culprits are generally punished by being kept in confinement on the next holiday, or by the withdrawal of some indulgence.

I must not betray so much want of gallantry as to enter into a particular description of the "cackling" which greeted my ears as soon as the doors of this *salle* were thrown open; I content myself with recording the indisputable fact, that the "rule of silence" was neither enforced nor observed among these dames.

Corresponding with this, on the other side, is the *tabagie des hommes*, where, if the ears are less offended, it must be admitted the eyes and nose do not escape scott free.

Husbands and wives are separated as long as they remain here, but are allowed to see each other on Thursdays and Sundays for one hour. Those who are able to walk about have full liberty to go out and come in when they please; so that they can meet as often as they are inclined anywhere but within the walls. Those who are unable to go out, may receive their friends twice a week, for an hour each time.

All who are in health rise at half-past five. They have no regular breakfast laid, but can take anything they like, and eat it as they can. They dine (?) at ten, sup at four, and go to bed at six. They have meat four times a week, and soup on the remaining days.

The house is always full, and no sooner does a vacancy occur, than a new candidate presents himself.

The Administration des Hospices provides funds for the house, but the *incurables* are supported by the parishes, whence they are sent.

Those who die are buried within two hours of their death, unless it happens to be a case for an inquest. There are two chaplains and two physicians attached to the house.

At the time the cholera visited Lille, this was the last place it attacked, but when it did appear, it made terrible ravages, carrying off eighty persons within ten days. Two of the Sisters fell victims to its fury, but, strange to say, *not* those who attended on the patients, but who, on account of previous delicate health, had been spared their participation in the duty.

The chapel is plain, and the accommodation insufficient for the number of the inmates, and it does not open into the infirm wards, as is usually the case. It was burned down, and rebuilt about twenty years ago, but is neither so roomy nor so well disposed as before.

These Sisters have had the care of the *Hôpital* twenty-five years, before which time it was under the *Filles de St. Vincent.*

A small ward of about twenty beds was added, a few years since, by the bequest of a M. Delespont, whose name it bears, and who, being an extensive *fabricant,* filled it with a score of his own *ouvriers.*

CHAP. XXII.

I LEFT Lille to-day, and with some regret; it is a fine old town, and its street architecture tells a tale of former magnificence which greatly interests one.

A curious and beautiful custom prevails in this diocese and in other parts of France, which is new to me, and possibly to many of my readers. It consists in a weekly *quête* for the benefit of the souls in purgatory, relations of those who are too poor to offer Masses for them themselves.

The collection is made in this way; each family in the village takes its turn in providing a *brioche* for the *pain bénit* or *agape* distributed at High Mass, and it likewise falls to the lot of the same family to employ one of their members, sometimes a child, or even a servant, to go round to every house, on Saturday, with a large basket, in which are accumulated, portions of bread, larger or smaller, white or brown, according to the ability of the giver.

On Sunday morning, the bread so collected is sold to the poor at the church-doors, and the money it produces is received by the *marguiller* for the *tronc des trépassés*, for whom Masses are then announced, and usually said within a day after.

Reached St. Omer about the middle of the day. I have observed that railway regulations are vigorously enforced here, and had another instance of this to-day.

Two fellows in *blouses* got in at a small station we passed, and, as soon as we were fairly *en chemin*, each took a cigar out of his pocket, and turning to two ladies who sat next

one of them, asked if they objected to smoking, to which they replied that they *had* a great objection to it, and would be obliged to them to desist till they could get into one of the carriages set apart for that purpose. "Dans ce cas-là," said he brutally, "nous allons fumer tout de même, et puis nous verrons," added he, with a menacing air. The ladies, who were alone, seeming to need protection under this insolence, I pointed to the printed placard overhead, and hinted to the gentleman that probably he had not observed that prohibition. "Oh que si, Monsieur, je l'ai bien vu, mais cela ne me fait rien, non plus que tout ce que vous pourriez dire — vous." "Peut-être alors que Monsieur ne sait pas lire," said I, "car le sens y est fort clairement exprimé." "Je sais lire mieux que vous, aristocr—r—r—at!" rejoined he furiously, "et je vous le repète, je veux fumer ma cigarre, et même deux, trois, quatre, si cela me fait plaisir." To this I made no reply, but, watching my opportunity, suddenly drew the cigar from his mouth, and in an instant it was half a mile behind us on the road, to the utter astonishment of the disconcerted owner, who grew literally white with rage at his own defeat and the roars of laughter of our fellow-passengers. He doubled his fists, and swore, and menaced, but finding me perfectly impassible, bethought himself of another expedient; he took out a second cigar, and a *briquet*, and lighted successively six matches, each of which I as soon blew out. At length he found he must give this up too, and was recommencing his oaths and vituperations, when suddenly the train came to a stand, and hailing an officer, I stated my complaint, which was received with instant attention and civility. My friend in the *blouse*, who had been so valiant a little while before, now changed his tone, assuring the officer *he* was the injured party, that the whole story was a fabrication, that he had never attempted to smoke, and that my dispute with him pro-

ceeded from aristocratic pride, founded on the circumstance that I wore a coat, while he only figured in a *blouse*.

However, the rest of the passengers corroborated my statement, and I was assured he should be punished both for his transgression against the rules, and his insolence to the ladies and myself, upon which he and his companion were forthwith removed by one of the officials.

Arrived at St. Omer, I went, accompanied by an English friend I had met, to pay a visit to M. l'Abbé Toursel, at the *Séminaire St. Bertin*. I found his brother, the *Abbé* from London, there, on his way from Paris, and passed a very pleasant hour in the little *parloir*. Both are unusually well-informed, agreeable men, and it is always a great pleasure to converse with them.

Our discourse naturally turned upon the state of the Catholic Church in England, and the conversions which had taken place since I was last here. My English friend told them he had reason to believe that by far the greater proportion of the converts to whom they had alluded, had been received by the indefatigable Dr. Manning; and, indeed, I recently heard him, not inappropriately, termed "*L'Apôtre de l'Angleterre*," by a Belgian who seemed to appreciate the earnestness, the energy, and the judgment which characterize his labours.

I observed, that I believed it was often said, the refined and winning manners of this distinguished man, combined with a singular vigour and perspicuity of reasoning, and a happy command of language, tended to fascinate many who came within their influence; but though I did not mean to deny him these external gifts, I felt sure that the result was due to his inflexible faith, clear perception of truth, profound knowledge of the human heart, and rather therefore to supernatural, than to superficial attraction.

The London *Abbé*, who evidently has a keen apprehension

of character, agreed with me on this point, and then, addressing his brother, he continued: "Ah! tu devrais, une fois, l'entendre prêcher, toi; tu en serais content, tout difficile que tu es. Il sait si bien dire tout ce qu'il faut: et puis c'est un si bel extérieur; une tête pleine de grâce et de noblesse: avant même qu'il ouvre la bouche, on voit déjà, dans tout son maintien, l'esprit, l'intelligence, la sainteté même, de son caractère." "Et avec ça," I added, "une douceur, une patience à toute épreuve, accompagnées d'une humilité et d'un dévouement qui seraient dignes de S. Bernardin de Siène."

I may mention an instance of the Rev. Doctor's marvellous power over the minds of thinking persons, even in their most perverted state, which came to my knowledge not long since, and of which I do not suppose he himself ever heard.

The case was that of a young University-man holding no defined religious principles, who, without any previous intention on his own part, wandered into a church where the Doctor was preaching, and was so struck by what he heard, that he rose from the discourse, a believer.

Neither is it the only fact of this nature which might be stated. I believe the conversion of the Scotch reporter is known to many persons. He had been engaged to take down notes of four sermons preached by Dr. Manning, in one of our provincial towns, and although a hardened sceptic, was, —before the end of the third discourse—not only almost, but altogether, persuaded to become a Christian, which profession he soon after ratified by his reconciliation with the Church.

On leaving the *Séminaire*, I visited the *Frères des Ecoles*, whose new house is now in capital order, working well, and quite full; but there have been other changes since my last visit, and one or two of the *Frères* I then saw here, are now gone, some to the house at Aire, others to that at Marck.

The chapel has been completed, and as the *Supérieur* was good enough to order it to be lighted for me, I saw it to great advantage; the altar and tabernacle, which have been executed in oak, and gilt, from a design of one of the *Frères*, are magnificent.

Great *dégât* was made among their painted glass by the late hailstorm, but they were hoping soon to repair the damage.

Wednesday, October 3rd. — To the Cathedral early; schools, of about 300 children, occupied a large space before the high altar. They sat on benches previously arranged for them, and were under the care of three *Sœurs de la Visitation.* Several persons communicated, and when the priest was about taking the *ciborium* out of the tabernacle, the acolyth lighted a candle, and, following him with it in his hand, held it beside each person to whom he administered. I do not remember noticing this before, but I believe it denotes the dignity of the celebrant.

As I passed the *Eglise St. Jacques*, I saw about half-a-dozen carriages standing before the door, each displaying a little flagstaff, to which were attached white and pink ribbons, fluttering in the wind.

On the threshold and along the aisle, were strewn flowers, and sprigs of myrtle. I followed the crowd within the doors, and saw before the north transept altar, and within the rails, a young couple in bridal attire. The lady seemed absorbed in the service, but the attention and interest of the young man were apparently concentrated in his straw-coloured kid gloves, which, ever and anon, he contemplated with undisguised satisfaction!

I found all the shops here very extortionate, and in one I was strongly persuaded to purchase an article, the rarity of which was pressed upon me by the assurance, "ce sont des objets que nous n'obtenons que par *fraude.*"

Left by the three o'clock train, which, though an ex-

press, was three-quarters of an hour behind time in starting. However, the Dover boat seems used to these vagaries, for we found it awaiting us on our arrival at the pier.

A rough, but short, passage brought us safely into Dover Harbour; so badly, however, are the custom-house arrangements carried out here, that we were actually longer passing through the examining-room than we had been in crossing the Channel!

My readers will not need to be told that I have not taken them over all Belgium; there is yet much left which it would be extremely interesting to examine; but my time having been limited, I preferred searching thoroughly into that portion I was able to visit, to running superficially and unsatisfactorily over the whole.

The deficit can be supplied at any time, and if I believed that the recital of my investigations were likely to afford my readers only a small proportion of the pleasure and advantage I have experienced in making them, I should anticipate the accomplishment of my task with unmitigated gratification. In the meantime I may say, in the words of the great philosopher,

ει περι τουτων ἱκανως ειρηται τοις τυποις, τελος εχειν οιητεον την προαιρεσιν.

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